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VIVONIO.



A ROMANCE.



LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.



VIVONIO;

OR,

THE HOUR OF RETRIBUTION.

A Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

A YOUNG LADY.

Ask ye who hath done these deeds?

TASSO.

.. .. .

Even-handed Justice returns the poison'd chalice to our own lips.

SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

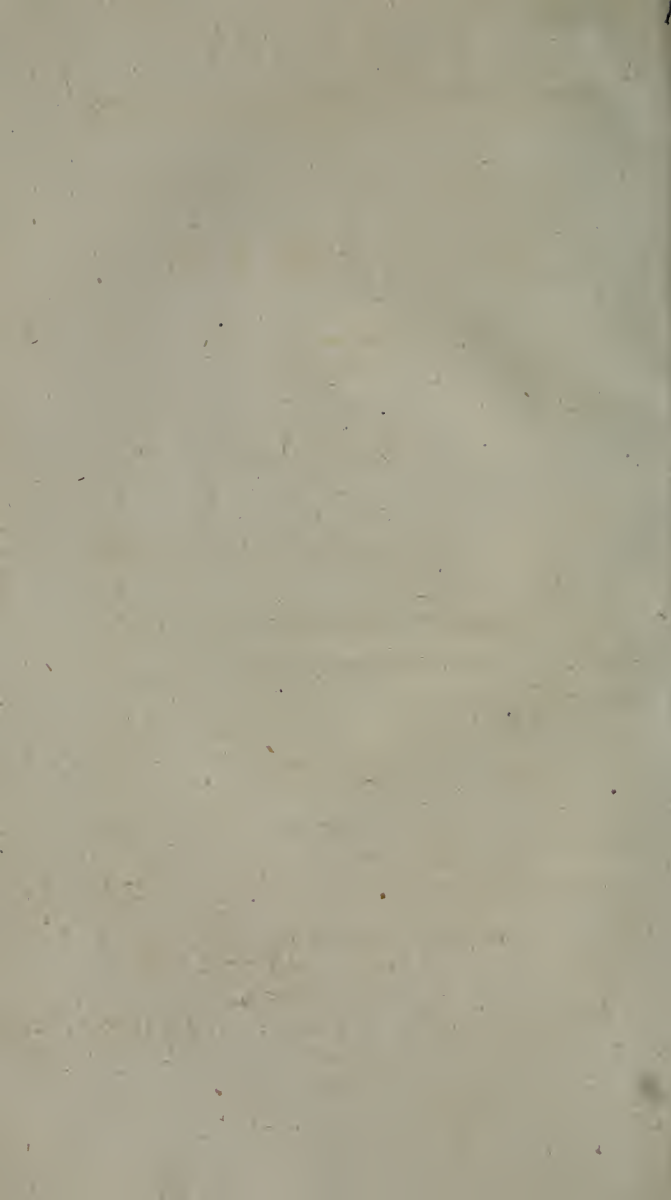
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LEADENHALL-STREET.

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V I V O N I O.

CHAP. I.

AFTER passing a few hours of intolerable mental anguish, Rosalia arose, languid, indisposed, and deeply dejected. The rose of health had now entirely fled from her cheek, and her once-brilliant eyes were heavy, and suffused with tears. Inattentive to the affectionate concern, and entreaties of Agnes, she sat overwhelmed with the most oppressive woe, till the voice of Don Hernandez, in the antichamber, aroused her from this lethargy of grief.

“ Oh, tell him I cannot, will not see—” she wildly exclaimed.

Agnes flew to obey this command. In a few moments she returned.

“ Is he gone ? ” anxiously demanded Rosalia.

“ Oh no, Senora,” replied the girl. “ The Senor says he *must* see you. Dear lady, compose yourself, and see him, for he says he cannot leave the apartments till you permit him to speak to you. I told him how ill you was ; but that made him only ten times more earnest :—and there he is walking about, as if he was distracted.”

Agnes had scarcely ceased, when Don Hernandez approached the chamber. Alarmed with the idea that he meant to intrude, Rosalia bade her attendant inform him she would attend him.

Endeavouring to summon spirits to support the hated interview, Rosalia proceeded to the apartment where Hernandez waited her appearance. As she entered, he flew
towards

towards her, and catching her hand, retained it, in despite of the evident disgust with which she regarded him, and led her to a chair.

“ You are ill !” he exclaimed, in a tone expressive of anguish. “ Oh Rosalia, your pale looks wound me to the soul ! Fool—idiot that I was ! why did I not take every precaution to prevent the scene of last night ? Retire,” he cried to Agnes, who had supported the drooping Rosalia into the room, and whose eyes he suddenly caught fixed on him, with a simple stare of wonder—“ retire instantly.”

Perceiving that this mandate had offended Rosalia, and that she was on the point of insisting that the girl should remain, he lowered his voice, and entreated her to order her attendant to withdraw.

“ I wish to speak to you, Lady Rosalia,” continued he, “ on the most important concerns. I wish to let you know what are now my final intentions. Oh, do not

irritate my most unhappy temper ! Hear me alone, and with patience !”

Rosalia, apprehending that if she refused to send the girl away, Hernandez would again exert an insolent authority, and command her absence, said—

“ Wait in the antichamber, Agnes.”

The girl reluctantly withdrew. Hernandez, after pacing the apartment in great agitation, and examining whether Agnes had closed the door, again approached Rosalia. In silence he gazed on her for a moment : her averted eyes, the grief and despair pictured in her beautiful features, wrung his heart with a keen pang of remorse.—But, alas ! he had never known the divine influence of religion—he had never allowed his passions to yield to her mild dictates ; and the sting he now felt was, of course, but momentary. The enchanting beauty of Rosalia filled his imagination, and he was determined to use every effort to obtain her.

“ Lady

“Lady Rosalia,” said he, “suffer me to entreat you will endeavour to conquer this unavailing sorrow. You distract me by the sight of your grief, but you cannot alter the resolutions I have formed. Could you have relied upon my promises of speedily liberating you, your wish of leaving me might have been soon accomplished; but your doubts have led you to take an imprudent step, which now will compel me to detain you, and——”

“If such is your determination, Don Hernandez, I have heard enough,” interrupted Rosalia, with dignity, and rising from her seat, attempted to withdraw.

“Nay, you must not fly me thus, Lady Rosalia,” exclaimed Hernandez, instantly catching her hand, which, after retaining for a moment, he respectfully relinquished.

“Stay, I entreat, and hear me. I am anxious to demonstrate, by my conduct, the respect and ardent affection with which I regard you; but I cannot permit you to leave the castle now. You have discovered

that I am above the prejudices of bigotry and superstition——”

Rosalia shuddered with horror.

“ I perceive,” he continued, “ that this discovery has rendered me odious in your eyes ; but if ever I am restored to the faith you profess, *that* must depend on you.”

Rosalia regarded him with a look of mingled astonishment, disdain, and contempt. Though severely hurt by the expression of her countenance, he appeared not to notice it, and continued—

“ Yes, Lady, by *your* means only can I be reclaimed. Oh, lovely Rosalia ! consent to be mine, and that moment those caverns shall be divested of their present inmates. Every moment of my life shall be devoted to you alone. I possess incalculable wealth ; to you I will submit the disposal of it. Holy choirs shall own you for their pious foundress, and——”

“ Cease—cease, I entreat you,” interrupted Rosalia.—“ Cease this ridiculous mockery !

mockery! The ever to be regretted events of last night had prepared me to expect that you would screen your unjust detention of me beneath the veil which my having witnessed your impious apostasy has afforded you. But do not hope to conquer the increasing horror I feel at your character. I will hear no more."

During this speech the hypocritical softness of the vile Hernandez vanished, and all the haughty qualities of his soul were pourtrayed in his expressive countenance, and apparent in his demeanour.

"I have submitted, Lady Rosalia," said he, while pride and anger flushed his cheek, and added to the native fire of his eye, "to become the slave of your caprices, and am justly rewarded with your contempt. I have acknowledged my errors," continued he, with a bitter and contemptuous sneer—"I have *sued* for the pardon and pity of a baby, who knows not her own mind, and *this* is the return.—But hear me, Lady," added he, resuming his

haughty tone, “ flatter not yourself with the vain hope that I will ever part with you : you, and you only, had the power to touch my heart, with the misery of unconquerable love, and I never—never will relinquish you ! Consent then to give your hand to the man who idolizes you, and I will shortly conduct you back to Italy ; reject me, and you are my prisoner for life ! ”

If any thing could have increased the horror and detestation with which Rosalia viewed Hernandez, this speech, so replete with unparalleled insolence and villainy, would. A glow of indignation suffused her pale countenance ; but the mild dignity of her manner remained unaltered. She regarded him for a moment with a calm but penetrating look, which, while it displayed the superiority of her mind, and her innate virtue, awed her vile persecutor into silence. After a short pause, she said—

“ Unfriended, and in your power, Don
Hernandez,

Hernandez, I have been compelled to listen to language as disgraceful to yourself, as it is insolent and offensive to me; but after what I discovered last night, I am not surprised. The apostate to his God must be incapable of just and generous feelings.—But no more of this. Call to your remembrance the solemn declaration I made on our first interview, when you avowed the partiality which you unfortunately affect to feel for me: recollect I then declared that no power on earth should compel me to become your's; and do not judge so meanly of me, as to suppose I will ever retract that sacred asseveration. You may confine me, my life may prove a sacrifice to your unequalled baseness; but rest assured your guilt will not escape punishment. The fate of a female of my rank cannot remain long undiscovered.—But I will not dwell on this subject: you are acquainted with my determination, and I repeat, it is unalterable.”

“ You persist then in refusing my hand, Lady Rosalia ?” cried Hernandez, while he seemed to struggle with inward rage: “ And think you, after what you beheld last night, that I will ever part with you, and rest my safety on the extorted vow of a woman ?—No ; henceforth our interests must be one : as my wife only, shall you evermore behold the shores of Italy.”

“ And do you suppose, Don Hernandez,” returned Rosalia, “ that my silence, though observed to death, could ensure your safety ?—Oh no ! Yet the vow which I have uttered, I will most religiously fulfil. But remember,” she added, with solemnity, “ your crimes, which now defy the power of mortal justice, will yet be punished by the hand of divine vengeance. Deluded, lost man, your vices, though now concealed in the dark depths of the earth, will yet be visible to the affrighted world ; and your fate will be as dreadfully

dreadfully awful, as your presumptuous impiety is abominable !”

Whilst Rosalia, like an angel, with prophetic sadness, thus warned Hernandez of the fate he might justly expect, his feelings were so violent, that they bereft him of the power of utterance. He stood immoveable. One moment he shrunk from the keen agony of remorse; the next, all the dark passions of his soul were again predominant, and his wounded pride impelled him to hate the lovely being, whom his base machinations had overwhelmed with sorrow. When she ceased, he paced the apartment with hasty steps for a few minutes; then suddenly pausing, he threw on her a glance of undescribable malignancy, and uttering a half-restrained malediction, rushed from the room.

Although this expression of Hernandez was too inarticulately spoken to be understood by Rosalia, yet the horrible look which had accompanied it conveyed a full sense of its meaning. His abrupt depar-

ture had relieved her from the view of a being most odious in her sight; but it had not removed the terror with which his threats had impressed her mind. That her words had in the highest degree incensed him, was obvious, and she had but too much reason to apprehend every thing alarming from the vindictive rage of a man, whose conscience was as invulnerably steeled against the stings of remorse, as his breast was inaccessible to honour, justice, or humanity. Her spirits, which before the lapse of the few last hours, had been bouyed up by the slender hope she had ventured to indulge of being yet able to escape from her imprisonment, now totally sunk under the terrifying conviction of being compelled to endure it, perhaps for ever! The miseries of her fate seemed rapidly hastening to a dreadful crisis, and the hapless Rosalia had now abandoned herself to the horrors of despair, had not her guardian angel sweetly whispered, in the accents of divine truth—“ *Despair not:* the gracious

Power who protects the innocent will never forsake those who rely on *Him alone* for aid."

Absorbed in reflection, Rosalia observed not the continued absence of Agnes, till the abrupt entrance of the girl reminded her of the circumstance.

" Oh, dear Senora !" she exclaimed, the moment she had shut the door, " was not you frightened when I staid away so long? But what do you think ? When the Senor begged you to send me away, and I went into the antichamber, I saw Pedro was there. Well, he drew me over to the great window, at the further end of the room, and begins saying, that he would give me ten pistols, if I would tell him how you got into the south tower last night. He knows all about it, Senora. So, I suppose, they will take fine care we shan't get out of these rooms again. Do you know, Senora, that Pedro, as he went away just now, locked the door of the antichamber. Well, Senora, when he asked how you found

found your way into the tower, I told him I didn't know, for I was asleep, and when I woke, I found you in a fit. That was so lucky, wasn't it, Senora? It was the truth you know. Well, Pedro coaxed me, and scolded, and coaxed again; but still I kept in the same story. Oh dear, he did so try to find all out; but he couldn't get any thing out of me. However, he says that the Senor was half mad at your having tried to escape; and he said too that he will take good care to stop your rambling."

No part of this information surprised Rosalia. She wondered only at Hernandez having forbore to question herself more closely on the subject relative to her having found access to the caves. As to his strictly confining her in future, it was only what might be expected; yet it was no small source of regret to be debarred from endeavouring to once more explore the subterranean caverns. Well recollecting the two arcades, she now bitterly lamented that, instead of entering the one on the right,

right, she had not proceeded through that on the left. The first had served no other purpose than to make her more wretched; but by having pursued the course of the latter, she might have discovered an outlet, through which her escape might have been effected—a conjecture to which the persuasion of the unfortunate Victoria de Avilla having been formerly an inmate of the south tower, and her escape from thence, gave every appearance of probability.

During the remainder of the day, poor Agnes exerted her simple endeavours to cheer her dear Senora, by forming a thousand little plans to quit the castle. Though these were both futile and impracticable, yet as the artless prattle of the girl sometimes relieved Rosalia from the agony of reflection, she was allowed to proceed, while the latter felt gratefully sensible of the sincere affection which suggested these efforts to sooth her sorrows.

Day

Day after day Hernandez continued to intrude his odious visits: tired with the obstinacy, as he termed the unchanging resolve of Rosalia, he each time became more insolent and presuming, insomuch that she never beheld him without experiencing the most dreadful alarms. In vain she flew to the oratory to avoid him: he intruded even on this sacred retreat, and there forced her to listen to his abhorred protestations of what he called love.

In one of these visits, and in answer to her expostulations on the folly of persevering in seeking to obtain her hand, Hernandez plainly intimated an intention of having recourse to measures that would infallibly ensure her compliance.

“The displeasure of your family,” he continued, “were they certain of your being here, I should set at defiance: bestow your hand on me, and it is in no respect to be apprehended. The Marchese di Romanzini cannot but approve of his daughter

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ter having united herself to a nobleman, whose rank and fortune are so much superior to those of Guidoni."

Without noticing the effect which the mention of this loved name had produced on Rosalia, he proceeded—

"This proposal I allow you a fortnight to consider of. Your own good sense will direct your choice, whether to partake my name and fortune, or force me to extremities I am anxious to avoid; for, be assured, after what you have seen, we can never part."

CHAP. II.

THE fortnight, at the end of which was to be determined the fate of Rosalia, was now rapidly advancing to its alarming close. Meanwhile, the lovely sufferer, devoid of all hope of human assistance, felt no cessation of anguish, but when at the foot of the altar.

One night, while at her customary devotions in the oratory, she was startled by a sound, resembling the quick breathings of a person in great agitation. This noise, so alarming in a place where she had supposed herself to be alone, and especially

so.

so, at the still hour of midnight, appeared as if quite near to Rosalia. She paused, and listened with fearful attention. The sounds continued for a few moments, and were succeeded by a deep-drawn sigh ; at the same instant, the velvet which overhung the altar was hastily upraised ; and from beneath appeared a female figure, cloathed in black, who evidently had arisen from an opening in the floor.

From the first moment of her alarm, the senses of Rosalia continued suspended, in the horror of expectation. The sight of the figure entirely overpowered her, and she sunk into a momentary insensibility, from which she was recalled by a human voice, which, in a tone of distress, repeatedly pronounced her name.

When Rosalia opened her eyes, they encountered the face and form of Zellida ; but how altered ! she looked pale, dejected, and sorrowful.

“ How came you here ? ” demanded Rosalia,

salia, shrinking from the supporting arms of this wretched female.

“Be not alarmed, Lady,” returned Zellida, in whispering accents; “in me you behold not an enemy. I am come to give you liberty—instant liberty! Will you confide in me?”

Perceiving distrust and doubt pictured in the countenance of Rosalia, she continued—

“What deception can you dread? There needs no artifice to place you more completely in the power of your cruel foe, than you are at present.”

She paused.

Rosalia mentally assented to the truth of this observation. She turned her eyes on the wan features of Zellida: anxiety, grief, and contrition, were strikingly portrayed there. Rosalia now involuntarily felt inclined to place a confidence in this woman. It was true, she had at first beheld her as the vile agent of Hernandez; but

but she now recollected that Zellida was not in the group of females she had seen in the subterraneous apartment. It was possible, she thought, that having sincerely repented of having assisted in the iniquitous plan of carrying her off, Zellida was now anxious to make the only atonement in her power, that of restoring her to liberty:—if such was the case, what madness to reject her offers?

Whilst these reflections darted across the mind of Rosalia, Zellida observed her with inquietude. Supposing that distrust held her silent, she at length exclaimed—

“ Can you hesitate, after the threatenings you have heard—after what you have seen? Are you not acquainted with part of the horrid secrets of the castle—the deserted chambers—the caverns——”

Rosalia shuddered at the dreadful recollection.

“ Oh, save me—save me !” she faintly cried.

“ Confide

“ Confide in me, Lady,” returned Zellida, “ and you shall be restored to happiness. I have long meditated to give you liberty. At a future period, you shall know my motives for thus hazarding my life to save you. Till this night, I could not put my wishes into practice. Agnes is, I believe, sincerely attached to you, Senora. Do you chuse she should be the companion of our flight?”

“ Oh, most certainly,” replied Rosalia.

“ Then let us haste, Lady,” rejoined Zellida, “ the hour is almost arrived : not a moment must be lost. All is ready for your departure.”

She then stopped, and hastily drew from beneath the altar a black dress, and veil of the same colour.

“ This sable attire, Senora,” said she, “ you will find much more convenient than your present dress. Allow me to assist you.”

Rosalia joyfully acquiesced, and having hastily exchanged the splendid habit she wore,

wore, for that she had received, was in a few minutes ready to attend her guide, who, taking a lamp, preceded her from the oratory, saying, in a tone that made her tremble—

“ I hope we are not too late.”

Agnes was quickly aroused from profound sleep. The sight of two figures, robed in black, standing beside the couch, struck the poor girl with such horror, that she had scarcely power to breathe. The voice of Rosalia, however, would have soon dissipated her terrors, had she not again cast her eyes on Zellida, when they instantly returned, and she shrunk from the alarming view.

“ Arise,” said Rosalia, with quickness—
“ arise ! Instantly dismiss these fears.—
Arise, or the moment of escape will be lost !”

Agnes needed no more : the word “ escape” was sufficient to reanimate her spirits. She started up, and hastily dressed herself, though at the time she could scarcely

scarcely refrain expressing both surprise and terror, as she gazed on the mysterious companion of her lady.

Agnes being ready to attend, Zellida proceeded to the antichamber, the door of which Pedro had carefully locked every night, since that on which Rosalia descended to the subterranean cave. This circumstance suddenly occurring to the recollection of the latter, she now trembled lest this obstacle would be found insurmountable; but her apprehensions vanished when she saw her conductress apply a key to the lock, and, instantly after, throw open the door.

Though so violently agitated, as to be compelled to lean on the arm of Agnes for support, Rosalia endeavoured to use equal speed with Zellida, who glided swiftly along the corridor, and from thence down the stairs into the black marble hall.

The night was dark and tempestuous. The chilling winds moaned through the wide range of Gothic pillars, which, intercepting
ing

ing the wavering rays of the lamp, threw dark and lengthened shadows on the surrounding objects.

Here Zellida more carefully shaded the light with her veil, and paused, as she crossed the echoing pavement, to listen. No sound but that of the roaring cataract, mingled with the wintry gale, howling through the tall forests, met her ear. Turning towards Rosalia, she beckoned her to follow, and then proceeded to a low Gothic door, a few paces distant from that which opened on the cliff. Having given the lamp to Agnes, Zellida hastily unlocked the door.

“This way is rough and uneven,” said she, taking the lamp from the girl, and raising it, the light of which, indistinctly flashing in the current of air, discovered to the view of Rosalia several mouldering steps.

“Give me your hand, Lady,” added she, “I will conduct you.”

At this moment, the folding doors of the

hall flew open, and Don Hernandez, followed by Pedro, bearing a lighted torch, rushed in!

Zellida instantly fled. Rosalia, the pale image of despair, stood motionless.

“Fly! Secure that treacherous fiend!” exclaimed Hernandez to his attendant, while malignant fury flashed from his eyes.

The servant flew to obey this mandate, and, in a few moments, returned with Zellida, who, with a haughty air, and firm step, preceded her pursuer into the hall.

Hernandez fixed his eyes on her, and, with the horrible smile of malice—

“Deceitful, artful wretch!” he exclaimed, “what has tempted you to seek certain destruction?”

“Humanity commanded the attempt,” replied she, with an undaunted look. “I would have spared you the dreadful remorse, which the ruin of this innocent would occasion you.”

“Hypocrite! detested sorceress!” cried Hernandez, in a voice which rage rendered almost

almost inarticulate, “dare you think I am again to be imposed on? Humanity! where was your vaunted humanity, when you planned the ruin of the parents of this lovely being! Rosalia—Rosalia!” he continued, “you have listened to the delusions of a wretch, who would have plunged you into infamy! Behold in *her* the *murderess of your mother*, and the *insatiate enemy of your house!*”

No language can describe the consternation and horror of Rosalia at these words: the violence of the shock overcame her senses, and she had sunk to the ground, had not Hernandez, the excess of whose passion was checked by this sight, suddenly caught her in his arms. Zellida and Agnes had just approached to afford their assistance to the lovely sufferer, when Hernandez, with execrable slyness, softly drew a poniard from his sash, and, as the unfortunate Zellida leaned forward to raise the hand of the inanimate Rosalia, he, while with one arm he supported his hapless

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victim,

victim, suddenly extended the other, and plunged the poniard in the bosom of the former, who, sinking beneath the force of the blow, faintly exclaimed—

“Your revenge, inhuman monster, is—”

Hernandez heard her not. Followed by Pedro and the terrified Agnes, he conveyed the still insensible Rosalia to the deserted chambers, and from thence down the stone steps, leading to the caverns. Having reached the sumptuous apartment, every effort was used to effect her recovery. Meanwhile, Pédro, by command of his Lord, hastened back to the hall, in order to dispose of the body of Zellida.

A considerable time elapsed before Rosalia displayed any sign of returning sensibility. At length, however, she slowly revived, but had no sooner glanced her languid eyes around the subterraneous apartment, than, becoming conscious of where she was, the horrors of her situation pressed so forcibly on her mind, that she immediately relapsed!

Don

Don Hernandez, half distracted at her alarming state, raved at the trembling Agnes, whose natural timidity and awkwardness were so much increased by her fright at his anger, that she was almost incapable of rendering her assistance to recover her lady.

After a long time spent in successive endeavours, the lovely unhappy Rosalia was once more restored to animation. Hernandez had now the prudence to retire, and for several minutes kept out of her view.

When she opened her eyes, she threw a wild yet languid glance around: her ideas were confused; several times she passed her trembling hand across her aching brow—the dreadful reality at length flashed on her mind, and, in accents of deep horror, she said—

“Where is he?”

The weeping Agnes, who, at that moment, caught the fiery eyes of Hernandez

angrily fixed on herself, durst not reply to this question.

“ My fate is now certain !” said Rosalia, with all the chilling calmness of despair.

“ Loveliest Rosalia !” cried Hernandez, now advancing, “ you have nought to fear. Be not alarmed at finding yourself in these apartments ;—their late inmates are banished for ever from these abodes : *you* now reign *sole mistress* here.”

Rosalia, who had uttered a faint shriek at his approach, now hid her face beneath her veil, while in deep and convulsive sighs she alone gave utterance to the agony which rent her heart.

Hernandez now threw himself at her feet, protested she had no cause for terror, and solemnly promised never to visit the apartments without her permission.

While speaking, he drew aside the veil which had concealed the pallid countenance of his lovely intended victim. This action, so humiliating, so insulting, excited

cited the liveliest indignation and resentment in the bosom of Rosalia. She started from him: her emotions were too violent for utterance, and she burst into a shower of tears, which relieved the heavy oppression of her heart.

Hernandez, apparently shocked at her grief, assumed an air of persuasive softness, and, in terms the most respectful, entreated her pardon, and vowed that he would ever pay the highest deference to her virtues.

The tempest, which had long hovered in the air, now raged with violence, and the deep-toned thunder reverberated through the lofty caverns. Hernandez ceased his protestations: he paced the apartment in silent agitation, pausing occasionally to mark the loud echoes which followed each tremendous peal.

A solitary lamp threw a dim and sickly light around, and gave a desolate air to the splendid cavern. Hernandez, raving at the delay of Pedro, commanded Agnes to light the surrounding lamps; but she not being

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able

able to execute this order so soon as his impatience required, he himself assisted her, and, in a short time, the cheerless gloom yielded to a blaze of brilliance. He then withdrew, fastening the door after him, and quickly returned with some refreshments.

The storm still continued : the loud thunders, with increasing violence, resounded through the rocks. Hernandez endeavoured to silence his reflections, by repeated goblets of wine, of which he eagerly importuned the hapless Rosalia to taste. Unable to prevail, he at length compelled her to raise the sparkling cup to her trembling lips. He then renewed his promises of ever treating her with inviolable respect ; from these he proceeded to vows of eternal love ; and gradually growing more and more presuming, she was driven almost to madness by this conduct, when hasty steps were heard advancing, and, in a moment, Pedro rushed into the apartment, exclaiming—

“ My Lord—my Lord ! we are undone !

All

All is betrayed! The most terrible confusion reigns throughout the castle!"

The man then fled. Hernandez, struck with astonishment and terror, stood rivetted to the spot, then suddenly rushed towards the door, but instantly returned, and pale as death, threw himself on a sofa. In the next moment the apartment was filled with men cloathed in black, some of whom carried lighted torches.

One of the men advanced, and, assuming an air of authority, addressed Hernandez with these alarming words:—

"You, Hernandez de Marino, we command you to surrender, in the name of the most Holy Inquisition!"

Vice possesses no true courage: either desperate or cowardly, it madly braves its fate, or sinks into abject imbecility.—The exalted, the proud, the haughty Don Hernandez, now appeared fallen beneath contempt:—the suddenness of this awful stroke deprived him of all recollection, and he remained apparently insensible.

Whilst some of the officials were busied in restoring Hernandez, others accosted Rosalia, who feeling not half the terror of the holy officer, which she experienced while in the power of her base persecutor, mentally acknowledged the protection of Heaven, in this deliverance from the dread fate that had threatened her. To the questions that were asked her, she replied with modest firmness. On being informed that she was also a prisoner, she was surprised; but conscious innocence suppressed her fears. The violent emotions which she had just undergone had, however, so enfeebled her slight frame, that, on attempting to accompany her guard, she found herself unable to proceed. One of the officers observing this, with more civility than she had hoped, offered to assist her.

Followed by the dismayed Agnes, who was likewise included in the arrestation, Rosalia was now led from the caverns, and, after passing through the long passages
already

already mentioned, they proceeded up two flights of the narrow stone steps; but, instead of ascending those that communicated with the deserted chambers, they paused on the landing of the second; and here one of the guards opened a small door, artfully contrived in the wall, and led the way into a magnificent bedchamber, which, by several articles of dress that lay scattered about, she concluded to be the one usually occupied by Hernandez. From this apartment she was conducted, through a long gallery hung with pictures, into a corridor, at the end of which they descended a broad flight of marble stairs into the grand hall, which was now filled with soldiers.

Here the officials paused. Several of them remained near Rosalia and her attendant, while one went to order the carriage, that was to convey her from the castle, to draw up to the ponderous gates. Faint and agitated, the lovely girl shrunk from the noise and confusion that surrounded her.

The soldiers, hurrying to and fro through the spacious hall, stopped to observe her; her beauty attracted their earnest attention: but the admiration and curiosity which marked their fierce countenances, seemed checked by the awe with which the officials of the Holy Office appeared to impress them. Rosalia turned away from the rude gaze, and drew her veil closer over her face. Still in the distance were seen bands of soldiers, pacing between the massy marble pillars, whose warlike figures intercepting the light of the blazing torches, threw gigantic shadows on the walls, and on the chequered pavement of the hall, while their high military air was singularly contrasted with the slow and solemn demeanour of the officials.

Loud steps now resounded along the corridor, and lights flashed on the fretted roof of the hall. Rosalia involuntarily raised her eyes, and beheld a party of officials, in the midst of whom she perceived Don Hernandez: his air was sullen, yet majestic. As

he descended the marble stairs, he threw a glance of proud indifference on the busy scene beneath. On entering the hall, a haughty and unbending scorn seemed to flush his features; but when his eye encountered Rosalia, his countenance underwent a change. However, he quickly recovered himself, and at that moment the official returned to say the carriages were ready.

Rosalia and Agnes were placed in a close carriage, with one of the officers. Hernandez was accompanied by two officers, both well armed, and the carriage these occupied was surrounded with a troop of cavalry. When they drove off, the remainder of the officials returned into the castle, to direct the further researches of the soldiery.

CHAP. III.

TO account for the sudden arrest mentioned in the preceding chapter, it is necessary to inform the reader, that a denunciation, charging Don Hernandez de Marino with various crimes, had a short time before been given into the Holy Office ; but by whom, the Fathers of the Inquisition were ignorant ; yet nothing could exceed their astonishment at its contents. The public character of Don Hernandez was peculiarly amiable. His political opinions, and his services to the state, had rendered him highly beloved by his Sovereign ; while his seeming veneration for religion, his
noble

noble manners, and his unbounded generosity, endeared him to every rank of society. With such claims to universal esteem, the Inquisitors were inclined to doubt whether they should credit the list of enormities specified in the memorial. The charges, however, were of too serious a nature to suffer them to hesitate, and orders were accordingly issued for his immediate arrest.

The stile of the memorial evidently proved it to have been written by a penitent, who was well acquainted with, and had probably been a sharer in the crimes of the most complete hypocrite that ever disgraced his country and his name.

After a short preparatory address, in which the affecting expressions of deep remorse, and heart-felt sorrow, evinced sincerity of repentance, the writer proceeded—

“ It is almost needless, Holy Fathers, to point out to your just tribunal the affectionate care which Don Hernandez de Marino experienced

experienced from his uncle, Don Anselmo di Riverra. Consigned at the death of his parents to the guardianship of Don Anselmo, you doubtless know with what anxious solicitude that venerable man trained him to the paths of religion and virtue, till he was of age to proceed to the University. As further particulars on this subject might be judged unnecessary, I shall, Holy Fathers, confine myself to a simple narration of the facts connected with the accusations I thus presume to lay before you.

“ Hernandez de Marino was about nineteen, when, during a vacation, which he passed at the Castle de Riverra, an event occurred, in the course of which was laid the foundation of those impious and heinous crimes, which thereafter marked his life. The apartments which, from his childhood, had been appropriated to the use of Hernandez, are situate in the western wing, and closely adjoining the south tower, which latter, together with the south wing,

wing, have for a considerable number of years been shut up, under an idea of this part of the edifice being troubled with supernatural visitants: this prevailing opinion, Hernandez, naturally of a bold and daring spirit, and withal extremely incredulous respecting the existence of spirits, ever made the subject of his ridicule.

“But to return to the event I am about to relate.—On the very night succeeding the day on which he returned to the castle, he was suddenly awakened by a noise in his chamber. Starting up, he perceived, in an obscure corner of the room, the figure of a man, in whose hand was a lamp, which he carried in such a position as to prevent the rays reflecting on his own person. Hernandez sprang from his bed, and was instantly seized by four Moors, who merely suffering him to throw on a long cloak, hurried him through a small door-way, cut in the wall, and which had been hitherto concealed by the tapestry; thence they conveyed him down several flights of stone steps, which led into the passages communicating

municating with the vaults beneath the castle. Resistance, Hernandez perceived, would have only incensed the infidels, and caused them to deprive him of life; he therefore quietly suffered his conductors to lead him forward, till they reached the entrance of a subterranean cavern of considerable extent. Here they proceeded until they came to a suite of apartments formed in these caverns, and which Hernandez, with astonishment, observed were furnished in the Moorish stile, but by no means in the magnificent manner in which they are at present.—But I will not anticipate:—your vigilant justice, Holy Fathers, will doubtless investigate the truth of every circumstance I lay before you—Suffice it, Hernandez was amazed, on entering these subterraneous abodes. Though from infancy accustomed to hear various traditions relative to these caverns, yet, as he had frequently and vainly attempted to discover them, he had at length treated the whole as a mere fable.

“Now alarmingly certified of the hitherto
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hidden truth, and while he stood summoning fortitude to meet the fate he with reason supposed awaited him, his captors were angrily disputing with each other about what they should do with him. Two insisted that he should be carried into slavery; the others proposed his immediate death, alledging prudence as their motive for the severity of this measure—

‘As, should we take him to Algiers,’ they continued, ‘he may possibly escape from thence, and betray our secret haunt.’

“This consideration caused the latter sentence to be determined on.

“In vain Hernandez, who, having some knowledge of the Moorisco tongue, understood all that was said, entreated, swore, and promised to perform whatever should be required of him; the infidels dashed him to the ground, and the shining cimeter was upraised to strike the fatal blow, when it was suspended by the hand of a beautiful Moorish girl, who, at that moment, rushed in, and caught the arm
whilst

whilst uplifted against the life of the trembling Hernandez !

“ It is immaterial to recount at large what followed ; I shall therefore only say, the young female at length prevailed. The life of Hernandez was granted, on condition of his promising to abjure the Christian religion, and embracing that of Mahomet, and of his preserving the most profound secrecy concerning the caverns, and of being faithful to the cause of those into whose power he had fallen.

“ Hernandez readily agreed to these conditions ; he bound himself, by a tremendous oath, to observe them ; and from that hour became the confident and associate of the Moors.

“ The party he was now with, he soon found were pirates, and that the greater part of the crew were in the vessel which had lately sailed, for the purpose of making further incursions on the coasts. The chief, who had been severely wounded in an engagement, had been constrained to remain

main in the caverns till his wounds were healed, which they now partly were.

“ This man, Hernández also learned, was a native of Spain, and the head of one of those Moorish families who were banished from the country, by the edict of Philip ; since which period he had imbibed so implacable a hatred for the Catholics of Spain, that he determined to avenge his supposed injuries on every Spaniard whom he could tear from the bosom of their family, and consign to the miseries of slavery. For this purpose he provided himself with an excellent brigantine corsair, and for five years had successfully pursued this inhuman course. By the repeated descents he had made on the coasts of the Mediterranean, he had acquired wealth beyond even his wishes.

“ A meditated attack on the Castle de Riverra first discovered to these Moors a secret passage, leading from the ruins of the Convent of San Stephano, to these caverns ; but though they explored this
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immense subterranean passage to its utmost extent, they could not discern any opening, by which it might be supposed to communicate with the vaults of the castle. In consequence of this failure, the design of annoying the De Riverras was for a while relinquished, and at length totally abandoned; for as these caverns appeared to be entirely detached from the castle, and as the convent was only a heap of ruins, it occurred to the pirates, that the place would prove a safe receptacle where they might occasionally deposit, and conceal their plunder, and thus avoid the necessity of running into Algiers with every new spoil. This scheme being quickly agreed upon, the Moors set about blocking up the passage that led to the ruins, and clearing another they had lately discovered, and which they justly imagined extended to the extremity of the rocks, which overhung the sea. This work, however, was the employment of near two years, though, in order to carry it the sooner into effect, several Moors were left

left in the caverns, by whose exertions the undertaking was at length completed, to the great satisfaction of Zanga, the commander, as, whenever they had occasion to use the caverns, the corsair lay moored beneath these rocks, and, for the purpose of passing to and fro, this passage was extremely convenient.

“ For four years had they pursued this course unobserved and uninterrupted, when one of the Moors accidentally descried an aperture, which was filled up by a large piece of stone, so artfully fitted as to have hitherto eluded notice, and which could be easily removed by means of an engine for the purpose. This deceptive contrivance being at the extremity of the inner cavern, was supposed to afford access to the vaults beneath the castle, and should it really be so, might be well known to the De Riverra family. The latter supposition gave no small alarm to the Moors, who now began to tremble with the fear of being discovered; yet, to ascertain whether
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they had foundation for this fear, it was judged necessary to explore beyond this opening ; accordingly Zanga, and three of his men, proceeded through the vaults and passages, ascended the two first flights of stone steps that lead to the south tower, and, by having carefully examined every place as they passed, they here espied, in the wall, the private door, by opening which they gained admittance to the chamber of Hernandez. What followed, Holy Fathers, I have already stated.

“ That the life of Hernandez should have been spared by these ferocious infidels, or that he should thereafter also escape being sent into slavery, may appear extraordinary ; it is therefore necessary to more fully account for these seeming acts of clemency, so contrary to their usual practices.

“ Though the Moors had seemed to yield to the tears and entreaties of Zelima, yet at the moment when the cimeter was upraised to strike the fatal blow, the apparent

parent rashness and imprudence of the action occurred to Zanga. Suddenly struck with the idea that the De Riverras were certainly acquainted with the communication between the caverns and the castle, he endeavoured to learn whether this apprehension was just, by artfully questioning Hernandez, who, possessing no less presence of mind than penetration, instantly perceived that fear had suggested this enquiry, and imagining that his own safety materially depended on encouraging the idea that that of the Moors would be endangered by any act of violence done to him, he, without hesitation, confirmed the suspicions of Zanga.

“ The fate of Hernandez was now finally determined. To give him his life, and depend on his oaths, seemed the best alternative Zanga could take. The corsair had sailed, and there was no method to escape—should he put his captive to death, or confine him in the caverns till the return of the vessel, either proceeding would, he believed, lead

to a discovery of their hitherto secret retreat ; for it appeared certain that Don Anselmo would use every possible means to trace out his nephew ; and, as the way by which he had disappeared must also be known, it was reasonable to conclude that the caverns would undergo an immediate and thorough search—a circumstance that must prove fatal to the Moors then present, and even to those who were now away on a piratical cruize, whose return would be expected, and consequently watched for.

“ Swayed by the considerations of personal safety, Zanga, after Hernandez had taken the oaths, became as officiously civil as he had before been inhumanly ferocious ; for, besides these solemn obligations to secrecy, there was a chance that the splendid treasures which were now offered, and the marked admiration with which Hernandez gazed on the young and beautiful Zelima, would ensure his fidelity, at least till they should be able to escape.

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During the night, therefore, he was permitted to converse without restraint with Zelima, while Zanga, whose daughter she was, gave every encouragement to the passion he perceived she had inspired. The crafty Moor held out also repeated promises of the most brilliant treasure; and, in this plan, his success was equal to his wishes. Avarice, a predominant feature in the character of Hernandez, was strongly excited by the prospect of the wealth which such connexions opened to his view. He was enchanted with the beauty of Zelima—his senses were bewildered;—all the evil propensities of his soul, which had till then lain dormant, or at most appeared only in faint traits, were now suddenly called forth; and Hernandez, at the dawn of day, quitted the caverns, with a mind and disposition far different from those which had occupied his bosom on the preceding one.

“ The hurry and confusion of his thoughts rendered it impossible for him to

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appear

appear in the presence of Don Anselmo ; under the plea of indisposition, therefore, he confined himself to his chamber for the day ; and here he had full opportunity of arranging a plan for his future conduct, and indulging the awakened passions which now raged uncontrouled in his breast—the diamonds, the gold, which had been heaped before him as the rewards of fidelity, still glittered in his imagination, and he anticipated the accomplishment of his most ambitious desires, from his having certain and secret resources, beyond his most sanguine hopes. Amidst these cogitations the beautiful Zelima was remembered with rapture : — her father had more than once hinted, that, on his abjuring the Christian faith, Zelima should be his, and their bonds of friendship be strengthened by this means. The disposition of Hernandez was peculiarly favourable for the reception of any sophistry which promised a free indulgence to his passions. The mild restraint of Christian morality appeared

peared painful bonds, and which becoming more and more irksome in his idea, he soon came to a half-formed resolution of secretly renouncing those divine truths, which his naturally depraved heart taught him to call superstition and folly.

“ Never had time lingered so, in the opinion of Hernandez, as on this day. At length the ardently-desired evening came, and, after early dismissing his servant, and fastening his chamber door, he hurried to the caverns. On reaching the aperture, he found it closed up. A Moor, however, was on the watch for him, and he soon gained admittance. It is needless to say how joyfully he was received by the infidels, who, during his absence, had trembled for their own safety. Zelima’s eyes plainly spoke the rapture she felt on beholding him, and the captain immediately presented him with a considerable sum of money, and a quantity of valuable jewels. Hernandez then made known his intention of fulfilling that part of his oath that

related to his embracing Mahometanism, on the first opportunity, and, at this declaration, the caverns echoed with exulting shouts. He now received the betrothed hand of Zelima, and was elected captain of the caverns, in the absence of Zanga.

“Hernandez passed this night, and every other during his stay at the castle, in the caverns. He strictly observed his oath of secrecy and fidelity. The Moors adored him, and he fancied himself happy to the extent of his wishes. It was, however, a source of no small regret and anger to Zanga, that Hernandez was not the heir of Don Anselmo; and he even betrayed his vexation so far as to propose to the former, the removal of his cousin Isabella, as she alone was the bar to his succession. Lost as the wretched Hernandez now was, he was not yet so hardened as to give his consent to a measure that included either death or slavery; he therefore peremptorily rejected all advice of the kind: but, to keep on good terms with his infidel counsellor,

sellor, he proposed to marry Isabella, and thus secure to himself the possession of the castle. Zanga, of course, had no objection to his young proselyte's having a plurality of wives, and therefore was soon prevailed upon to concur in a plan, the success of which would ensure him the continued possession of caverns he had so long found both useful and convenient to his own purposes, and which at this time he was particularly anxious should be brought to a speedy issue, as the corsair had now continued a much longer time than usual on the cruise, and he was full of apprehensions of its having either foundered or been taken; either circumstance he feared would eventually involve himself, his daughter, and the Moors then with him, in the utmost distress, if not ruin, as then they should remain utterly devoid of means to remove themselves from a place, the only security for their present safety in which was the fidelity of Hernandez. This, however, Zanga had no cause to doubt.

Full as eager to obtain a legal right to the castle, as the Moor was anxious to behold him sole owner of it, he immediately affected to feel a passion for Isabella, as displeasing to her as agreeable to her father, who had long projected the union between his daughter and nephew, and now incessantly urged the claims of his dear Hernandez. The latter, however, was at this period considered by Don Anselmo as too young to take upon himself the important character of husband ; but he kept the hopes of his nephew alive, by intimating that, when he should have finished his studies at the University, no objection would remain.

“ The time for Hernandez’s leaving the castle now drew nigh. With a mind totally alienated from virtue, and occupied by a strong attachment to the society in the caverns, he was ill disposed to recommence a course of study, no longer in the least degree interesting ; it was therefore with unfeigned regret and stifled rage, that he

he submitted to prepare for his departure. Fascinated with Zelima, he knew not how to quit her, and Zanga was some hours before he could reconcile the young lovers to the idea of separation. Another large present of money, accompanied by flattering promises, to stimulate him to persevere in the fidelity he had vowed, produced a pleasing effect on Hernandez, who at length departed, though with a full determination of revisiting the castle as speedily as possible. When, however, this much wished for return took place, what was his rage and madness at finding the caverns deserted! He was almost frantic. He flew round the subterraneous apartments, calling in vain for Zelima. When his passion had a little subsided, he examined the place attentively, and at length found a bag of gold, and a letter. In this epistle Zanga informed him that he had quitted the caverns, with an intention of not returning thither for some time; but that if

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he, Hernandez, would still keep the secret, and conduct himself prudently, he might again hear of his friends. In the meanwhile, he was to use all his endeavours to obtain possession of the castle.

“ This vague billet gave but little consolation to Hernandez. He was much better pleased with the gold ; yet as motives of self-interest strongly enjoined him to observe the advice of Zanga, he resolved to follow it in the most minute particular. His matrimonial plan was soon disconcerted, however, by the decease of his aunt, Donna Seraphina. Soon after this melancholy event, Hernandez returned to the University. Don Anselmo and his daughter, to both of whom the castle, since the loss of a beloved wife and mother, was no longer the abode of tranquil happiness, accompanied him to Salamanca, where they staid a short time ; after which Don Anselmo placed his daughter as a boarder in the Convent of Santa Úrsula, and then proceeded

proceeded to travel, in the hope that variety of scene might ameliorate the grief that preyed upon his mind.

“ The studies of Hernandez were now pursued without pleasure or avidity. The scenes he had engaged in, while in the caverns, the remembrance of Zelima, and his disappointed hopes of amassing considerable wealth, by his connexion with the Moors, harrassed his mind, and rendered him discontented and indolent. A circumstance, however, that happened soon after his return to the University, completely banished the recollection of Zelima, and diverted all his thoughts into a new channel.

“ The fate of those unfortunate and criminal lovers, Alphonso de Avilla and Victoria de Gironne, is, doubtless, still remembered by the Holy Office. Don Carlos, the brother of the latter, as well as Alphonso, were fellow-students with, though rarely the associates of Hernandez, whose most intimate friend was Don Julio

de Salvador, a young nobleman, who, though outwardly prudent and regular in his conduct, was known by some to be innately dissolute and depraved. This latter circumstance was, however, not generally suspected; and on the celebration of Don Carlos's birth-day, Hernandez and Julio were invited to the *fête* given on the occasion. Here, in the castle of her father, Hernandez first saw Victoria de Gironne, and from that hour he became a most passionate admirer of her extreme beauty; and though he had no opportunity of seeing her after that night, found she had made too deep an impression on his mind to be erased by absence; he therefore determined, if possible, to obtain his uncle's consent to his addressing her: but before he could summon courage thus to risk the displeasure of Don Anselmo, he learned that Victoria was betrothed to Don Alphonso de Avilla, who almost adored her, and whose passion was returned by the young lady. Half distracted with this intelligence,

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telligence, he sought the happy Alphonso, and was by him soon convinced of the truth of the report.

“ Although the time spent by Hernandez amongst the Moors was of no considerable duration, yet, with such associates, it had been of sufficient length to draw forth and give increasing energy to all the evil propensities of his nature : his passions, revolted from reason, now raged uncontrouled in his breast, while the deepest innate hypocrisy gave the appearance of propriety to his actions. His will had now become his law. Mentally despising religious obligations, he no longer respected those moral ties which cement society ; and careful only to conceal the depravity of his heart, he studied the gratification of his every wish, with silent but unceasing diligence. Regarding Alphonso with the eye of jealous rage, and attributing to him the disappointment of his present wishes, he secretly formed the cruel design of separating the affianced lovers :—

lovers:—the gold and jewels he had received from Zanga furnished him with ample means for carrying this plan into execution. With the assistance of Julio, to whom Hernandez confided his base intentions, the unfortunate Alphonso was induced to accompany them on a party of pleasure, and in this excursion they contrived to confine the unhappy victim of their artifices, in a dungeon, beneath the ruins of a castle, near Zamora. But though Hernandez had thus succeeded in his attempt to divide Alphonso and Victoria, yet this barbarous step did not forward his views with respect to the latter, who, at this very period, was bereft of her only parent. Grief at the sudden death of Don Garcio, and the supposed desertion of her lover, respecting whose continued silence and absence, her feelings were repeatedly shocked by accounts, which, through the machinations of Hernandez reached her ear, at length so deeply affected the mind of Victoria, that, in a fit
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of despair, she took the veil, and thus crushed the aspiring hopes of Hernandez, who, enraged to madness, at a proceeding which he considered as a convincing proof of her unalterable attachment to Alphonso, and a no less certain one of the heavy dependency with which the supposition of his infidelity oppressed her heart, listened only to the hatred he felt for his once happy rival; and though he knew that an insurmountable barrier was now for ever opposed to the intended union, yet, to gratify the inveterate rancour he harboured in his breast, he resolved that Alphonso should languish out the remainder of his days in the dismal dungeon, in which his fell arts had caused him to be confined.

“ Some months after Victoria had taken the religious vows, Don Anselmo revisited Salamanca, and took his daughter from the convent. Hernandez now finally quitted the University, and accompanied his uncle and Donna Isabella to Madrid, where he quickly plunged into all the vices to which
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the metropolis furnished such various allurements ; yet with such profound secrecy did he follow his libertine pursuits, that the slightest suspicion never touched his moral character ; and Don Anselmo, who saw in him only a mirror of goodness, was now more than ever determined to bestow the hand of Donna Isabella on this—specious hypocrite.

“ The repeated communication of this intention, though always received by Hernandez with every outward demonstration of joy, never afforded him any inward satisfaction ; for, notwithstanding he still retained an earnest wish to obtain possession of the Castle de Riverra, yet the thoughts of a wife, whom he felt little disposed to love, being attached to the gift, rendered him less ardent to become master of the former.

“ Though immersed in all the pleasures best adapted to his inclinations, he found it impossible to banish the recollection of Victoria ; nor did he feel any abatement
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of his hatred for the unhappy Alphonso, whom he still caused to be held in his subterraneous prison ; and as he was no way inclined to recede from his intention of keeping him there for life, he was exceedingly disappointed when at length he received information that he had escaped ! This circumstance would have thrown Hernandez into great alarm and terror on his own account, had he not so contrived, in the execution of this part of his abominable plot, as to make Julio appear to be the author of it ; and this vile instrument of his had lately sailed for Mexico ; and should the affair immediately circulate, as he had no doubt it would, yet as he had seemed to have no active share in his own scheme, he knew that the odium of it would light wholly on Julio.

“ Thus secure from detection, he had ceased to think of Alphonso, when he heard that Victoria had flown from her convent, and was generally imagined to have gone off with her lover. Wild with rage,
Hernandez

Hernandez now used secret yet vigilant means to trace the fugitives ; but at this time all his endeavours failed of the wished for success.

“ Several months elapsed during these fruitless researches. Meanwhile, Hernandez became acquainted with the Count Alvania, who, at this period, had not long quitted Italy. This nobleman, though possessing many amiable qualities, was not remarkable for discernment, therefore not proof against the artifices of superior penetration, joined to consummate hypocrisy. Hernandez, in a short time, made the unwary Count his dupe in many instances.

“ Whilst for this purpose the former was devoting most of his time to the latter, Don Anselmo was exerting his influence with his daughter, to induce her to be propitious to the hopes he had given his nephew ; but without success. Isabella was now in a most perplexing situation : she had not only to combat against her father's entreaties and her own indifference for Hernandez,

Hernandez, but a passion which she had imbibed for the Count Alvania ; and this circumstance rendered her more than ever averse to a union with her cousin, for whom she felt only sisterly regard. During an illness which seized Don Anselmo at this period, Isabella attended him with such duteous affection, such filial anxiety and care, that the venerable man relinquished his design of giving her to Hernandez, and accompanied this alteration of intention by giving her a solemn promise never more to urge the subject. In the next interview he had with his nephew, he informed him of his late decision, expressing at the same time the deepest regret at being thus obliged to hurt his feelings, but which the happiness of his daughter rendered indispensable.

“ Hernandez, always on his guard, suffered not the chagrin which he felt on this occasion to become visible ; on the contrary, he acquiesced in his uncle’s determination with seeming sorrow and humility,

lity, professing that Isabella's peace was far dearer to him than his own. He soon after quitted the presence of Don Anselmo, who was no less grieved at the pain which he imagined he had given Hernandez, than impressed with admiration and esteem for his apparently generous resignation of his long cherished hopes.

“ This sudden termination of his suit to Isabella was, however, a circumstance by no means distressing to Hernandez. The possession of the castle was now no longer his wish, as it appeared to him very improbable that the Moors, after their secret *depôt* had been discovered, should return, and trust their safety to the discretion of a young man : it was much more likely, he thought, that they had deluded him with fallacious hopes and promises, merely to effect their own security, till they could remove the treasures from the caverns, whither, the more he reflected, the more he felt convinced, they would never again venture to return. As the wish of renewing
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and continuing his connexions with these men had been his principal inducement to the match, now that he could no longer indulge the hope of its gratification, he quickly reconciled himself to the decision of Don Anselmo. Besides, having been long weary of pretending a passion for Isabella, he had observed that she possessed uncommon sense and acute penetration: the latter quality had compelled him, whenever in her presence, to be careful even of his looks. Should she become his wife, he apprehended she would be a restraint on his pleasures, and could not fail to discover the natural depravity of his heart, which he might not always be able to conceal. The dread of being truly known to any but himself, was now removed. But the fortune of Isabella was large, and Hernandez could not forbear the wish of possessing, at least, some share of it, since he could not obtain the whole.

“He had observed her partiality for the Count Alvanio, and it now occurred to him,

him, that as she could not be his own, she could not bestow her hand on any man more likely to become the complete dupe of his designs, than the Count. Already had Hernandez obtained large sums of his credulous friend. Was he to bring about the union of Alvanio and Isabella, it was almost certain that he should then be enabled to plunder the weak Count, even more effectually than he had done. A few hours reflection served to convince Hernandez that, by this step, he should reap considerable advantages; and he accordingly determined to begin his plan immediately. In a succeeding interview with the Count, the latter was informed by Hernandez of his having been rejected by Isabella; and while he seemed to lament what he termed a severe disappointment, he plainly intimated that he believed her refusal of himself proceeded from the affection she entertained for the Count. Repeated assurances to this effect, flattered the vanity of Alvanio; and succeeding professions

fessions of being desirous to behold that treasure he could not obtain bestowed on his friend, and that friend the only man that could make her happy, had equal weight, with the former assertions, in the mind of the Count. Besides, the fortunes of Isabella were superior to his own. She was herself extremely beautiful and amiable; these were great inducements; added to which, he had private motives, sufficiently powerful in themselves to determine him, should she really regard him with her favour, to ardently seek her hand.

“ To be brief—the Count Alvania made formal proposals to Don Anselmo for his daughter, which were favourably received; and no obstacle whatever being opposed to the union, it was celebrated with a magnificence suitable to the rank of the united houses. A few weeks after this marriage, Don Anselmo quitted this world, to the excessive grief of his daughter, and no less to the secret satisfaction of his worthless nephew, who had ever dreaded the penetration of his careful guardian.

“ Thus

“ Thus freed from restraint, Hernandez launched into greater excesses than he had before ; yet still so secretly, that his public character remained unblemished ; the Count Alvanio now being the chief confidant and companion in his libertine career.

“ There was at this time in Madrid a foreigner, named the Count Rimaldi ; he was said to be a Florentine ; and on his first arrival he became an object of universal envy, for possessing a wife of uncommon beauty. This envy, however, was of no long duration : the character of the Countess soon unfolded itself ;—she was known to lead a life of ill concealed infamy. The charms of her person, her gay and fascinating manners, failed not to attract admirers. Hernandez, who was amongst the crowd, soon gained an ascendancy over this woman, equal to that which she maintained with despotic sway over her husband, and the rest of her lovers.

“ Shortly after his marriage, the Count
Alvanio

Alvanio was introduced by Hernandez to the Countess; and from this time, by a series of well-concerted stratagems, the former plunged every day into some new folly:—but Hernandez assiduously took care that the imbecility of the Count should not lead him publicly into error. Thus, whilst the world paid homage to the outward virtues of himself and his friend, they secretly rendered themselves truly undeserving of its least esteem.

“ Whilst the Count continued thus engaged in idle pursuits, and licentious connexions, he was not only lavishing away his own wealth, and that brought him by his lady, in these, but he was also loosing considerable sums to Rimaldi and Hernandez, insomuch so, that, at the expiration of two years, he judged it necessary to retire for a while from Madrid, and accordingly fixed upon the ancient Castle de Riverra, as the place best suited for a temporary seclusion, until the re-establishment of his affairs should enable him to return

to scenes, the being compelled to forsake which, he greatly regretted.

“ Hernandez heard this determination with inward pleasure. The rich supplies he had received from the Moors were quite exhausted. His fortune was indeed unimpaired ; and he was prudent enough not to think of diminishing that : he therefore resolved to be the partner of the Count’s intended retirement, and hoped, by this shew of friendship, he should have it in his power to make a further dupe of Alvanio, on their return to Madrid.

“ The Count, unwilling to acquaint his lady of the present deranged state of his affairs, professed, in her hearing, a sudden dislike to the metropolis, where he pretended his declining health rendered it improper for him to continue. The Countess, who was now the mother of a lovely boy, caught at this declaration, and spared her Lord the necessity of owning his intention, by eagerly pressing him to remove to the castle. Alvanio, of course, readily acquiesced

acquiesced in this request; and, shortly after, the whole party set off for De Riverra.

“ It was late in the evening when they arrived at this Gothic pile, where, to their surprise and chagrin, they found that no preparations had been made for their reception, as the letter which the Count had dispatched to his steward had not been received. All was now hurry and confusion, and the delay that ensued ere refreshments were served, prevented the weary travellers seeking repose till a late hour. The apartments to which Hernandez was then conducted, were those he had formerly occupied.

“ As he entered the chamber, the clock struck the midnight hour. Though fatigued with his late journey, yet, at sight of this well remembered room, all disposition to sleep vanished. He dismissed his servant, and, engrossed by reflections, continued for a while to pace the chamber. The caverns, the professions and letter of Zanga, the charms of Zelima, alternately

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flashed

flashed with increasing force on his recollection. At length, an idea that he had acted imprudently, in not trusting implicitly to the advice and promises of the Moor, rushed into and tormented his mind so much, that he felt incapable of resisting an impulse which prompted him to repair to the caverns.

“ Having provided himself with a lamp well supplied with oil, he descended, and soon reached the concealed aperture. Well knowing how to gain admittance, he passed through each cavern, till he reached the one which he imagined formed the extremity of these—to him once delightful, but now gloomy and desolate regions. So Hernandez thought, as he paused at the entrance, and glanced his eyes around the cavern, which is of an oval form, and was, at the period I now make mention of, but moderately furnished: it is at present most splendidly adorned, and used by its inmates as the banqueting saloon of these secret abodes.

“ Hernandez sighed as he surveyed this
place,

place, now so much the reverse of what he had been formerly accustomed to see it. Advancing, he perceived, on a marble table, which stood in the center, a number of goblets, and fragments of victuals; the freshness of the latter proved that the caverns had been recently resorted to, and this circumstance led Hernandez to conclude that they were still frequented as usual by the Moors. The surprise and pleasure he felt at this discovery, was, however, quickly converted into bitter vexation and regret. He had no longer any prospect of becoming the owner of the castle, and his failure in this respect would, of course, deprive him of the friendship of the infidels. Severely he reproached himself for having incited the Count Alvanio to address Isabella, who, had her hand not been sought by him, might have remained single, and pined away life, under the concealed sufferings of a hopeless passion: at her death, he should have enjoyed her right. His views on the Count's

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property

property had at best held forth only temporary resources ; and yet for these he had inconsiderately and rashly foregone superior and lasting advantages.

“ While he stood loading himself with upbraidings for a conduct, the imprudence of which had often struck him, but never so forcibly as now, his attention was suddenly attracted by a slight noise, and quickly turning to the part from whence it proceeded, he beheld advancing towards him the form of the lovely Zelima. Instantly recognising Hernandez, the lamp she carried fell from her hand, and uttering a shriek of mingled surprise and rapture, she threw herself into his arms, and was received with transport. The sound of her voice brought her father, who, perceiving the occasion of her exclamation, looked rather embarrassed, then assumed an air of sullen haughtiness. Hernandez released Zelima, and advancing towards Zanga, extended his hand, and expressed his satisfaction at this unexpected meeting
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in animated terms. The Moor's apprehensions and displeasure gradually vanished, as Hernandez, though at present unrequired so to do, repeated those oaths which bound him to secrecy. Crediting his sincerity, Zanga, after a few minutes spent in discourse, desired him to follow, then proceeded to the spot from which Zelima had appeared to come. Hernandez, tenderly supporting Zelima, was now conducted by the Moor through a cavity formed in the side of this rocky apartment; and having descended several irregular steps, they entered a rude vaulted cave, of extensive dimensions, where, in a large recess, sat a number of Moors drinking. At sight of Hernandez, they started up. A signal from their captain, however, immediately silenced their alarm, and quickly recollecting, in the noble Spaniard, their former associate, they all welcomed him with every demonstration of lively satisfaction. In the conversation that ensued, Hernandez soon found that

the Moors well knew he had no longer any prospect of gaining possession of the castle.

‘ My promises, I perceive, young Christian,’ said Zanga, ‘ were not depended upon by you, nor my advice observed. Well, by Mahomet, you have most effectually put it out of your own power to associate constantly with us. However, as I believe you have kept our secret with unshaken fidelity, I will befriend you in every instance in which I can serve you. As a proof of the confidence I still place in you, I have introduced you here. You may remember that when we last met in the caverns, you were unacquainted with this part of the subterranean abode; the communication between the interior and this cave, I can so well secure, that we have nothing to fear from the castle. The opening you have just now passed through, you must have observed, is somewhat similar to that which terminates the passages leading from the castle vaults into the caverns; the

the only difference is, that the flat stone which closes the aperture, instead of being shifted aside by an engine for the purpose, *here* turns on a pivot, and can be fastened on each side by a secret spring, so artfully contrived, that it cannot be perceived by any person unacquainted with the secret. Since your removal from the castle, we have but seldom used the interior apartments. In this rugged cave alone have our valuables been deposited, as you may observe,' continued the Moor, pointing out to Hernandez several large chests, different articles of rich furniture, and a number of packages, all of which lay at a small distance from the recess. 'Here we know ourselves secure from intrusion. I will now candidly confess, that, had you not surprised us this night, you would not have found us here on the next. To the unaltered affections of Zelima, you owe the chance of seeing us. Since you parted from her, she has accompanied me in every voyage, flattering herself with the

hope that you still retained that ardent passion you professed to feel for her; and has repeatedly passed hours in those chambers, anxiously waiting your approach, or, when by your lengthened absence, oppressed with sorrow, bewailing your forgetfulness and inconstancy.'

"Zanga paused a while, then resumed—

'Spaniard, I hear your fortune is not large. Fly with us to Algiers; Zelima, boundless wealth, and every pleasure which——'

"Hernandez started at this sudden proposition, so unexpected, so undesired, and hastily interrupting the Moor—

'No,' he cried, with vehemence, 'I will not forsake my country; but I will still be the friend of Zanga, the lover of Zelima, and the companion of those days you spend here.—Yes, I swear,' added he, 'this castle shall yet be mine!'

'How—how?' eagerly demanded Zanga, the rest of the Moors echoing the enquiry.

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“ In answer to these interrogations, Hernandez, in whose confidence the Count Alvanio had, both before and since his marriage, reposed every secret of his soul, boasted of the ascendancy he had acquired over the mind and actions of the Count ; and added, with an oath, that he would induce him to commit a crime, which would render it impossible for him to refuse any request he should make.

‘ I have no doubt of the success of my plan, and then the first request I make shall be for the transfer of his right in the castle to me.’

“ This scheme was applauded with loud shouts, succeeded by impatient enquiries from each mouth respecting what crime he could seduce the Count into, which would compel him to make such a sacrifice as the relinquishing the castle would be.

‘ A crime which would make him my slave for ever,’ replied Hernandez. ‘ He secretly and ardently loves a young and exquisitely beautiful woman, of high rank,

who is the wife of a husband who idolizes her, and on whom she in return doats with the tenderest affection. This lovely woman I will persuade Alvanio to tear from the arms of her husband and family. The weak credulous fool will readily fall into the snare. You must assist my plan. The lady—she must be carried off, and with the utmost secrecy.’

‘It shall be done,’ cried Zanga. ‘My friends,’ continued he, addressing his men, ‘shall we not hazard something for this Spaniard, who serves us with fidelity—shall we not aid a scheme, the success of which will secure to us this useful retreat?’

“This appeal of Zanga was received with loud approbation. Hernandez was now asked the name of the lady: this he refused to reveal; at the same time intimating that it would be time enough to finally arrange the plot when the Count had concurred in the measure, which Hernandez swore he could easily prevail on him to do without delay.

‘Pursue

‘Pursue your cruize,’ he added; ‘on your return hither, I hope all will be in readiness.’

“Zelima, who dreaded the being again separated from Hernandez, heard this advice with sorrow. She entreated to be left in the caverns; but this request Zanga refused to comply with: nor did Hernandez, who, engrossed by an unconquered passion for Victoria de Gironne, saw less charms in Zelima than he had formerly done, wish that the importunities of the latter might prevail.

“Mutual oaths of fidelity were now repeated. The hours flew rapidly away, and Hernandez, again well furnished with gold, at length bade adieu to his Moorish companions, and the lamenting Zelima, with outward signs of deep regret, and a bosom glowing with inward exultation, at having the renewed prospect of rich and continual resources; for, doubting not the success of the project he had suggested to the Moors, he already felt confident of their certainty.

“ In his assertion respecting the Count Alvania's secret passion, Hernandez had spoken truth : the unhappy Alvania still ardently loved his beautiful cousin, the Marchesa di Romanzizi — to banish her idea, he had married ; but neither the charms of his own lady, nor the diversified scenes of luxury and pleasure, in which he had successively engaged, had power to erase the indelible impression the former had made on his heart. The acquaintance between Hernandez and the Count had no sooner improved into strict intimacy, than the latter, hoping to relieve his mind from the load that oppressed it, confided this fatal secret to his insidious friend, who, imagining that he himself could derive no possible advantage from encouraging this blameable weakness, represented to Alvania the folly of indulging so imprudent and hopeless a passion ; but all the arguments he employed on this subject, however just, were unavailing ; and there were times when the Count would fly from the scenes of licentious-

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ness to which Hernandez had introduced him, and retire to solitude, there to think on the lovely Marchesa, and mourn the wretchedness of his own destiny. While reflecting on the repeated instances of undiminished attachment which the conduct of Alvania had frequently evinced, and the probability these afforded of drawing the Count into the snare he was preparing to undo him, the vile heart of Hernandez beat with malignant transport, and he exulted in the certainty of success.

“ Alvania, in the deep solitude of his castle, had appeared at times so evidently unhappy, that Hernandez had often justly attributed his melancholy to the secret passion which consumed him; yet as this was a circumstance that affected neither his feelings nor his interest, he forbore to mention his conjecture to the Count, who, dreading to encounter either the raillery or the reproaches of his specious friend, had of late shunned his society. This change towards himself, Hernandez had
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also remarked, though without being anxious about the cause, or displeased at the effect.—But now, full of the iniquitous plan he had just adopted, he began to follow the steps of Alvanio, and at length surprised him, while gazing intently on a small miniature picture, which the Count, unconscious of being observed, proclaimed to be that of the Marchesa di Romanzini, by breathing, through a deep-drawn sigh, the name of Adelaide.

“ This moment, so propitious to his designs, Hernandez seized with avidity ; he approached the Count, who, confused and vexed at the intrusion, strove to conceal the picture. This, however, he was prevented doing by Hernandez, who, claiming the privilege of a friend and confidant, soon obtained a view of this, till now, hidden treasure. Whilst surveying the portrait, which bore the resemblance of an exquisitely beautiful woman, Hernandez had no occasion to feign admiration, or to utter praises he did not think justly bestowed:

bestowed: so far the enchanting loveliness of the Marchesa coincided with his scheme. Instead of laughing at, and ridiculing the weakness of the Count, as he frequently had done, he now professed himself astonished how he could ever support the disappointment of those hopes which had once aspired to the possession of so angelic a being; commiserated the lingering pangs with which a love so hopeless had tortured his breast; and while he lavished the most animated praises on the beauty of the Marchesa, he roused the jealousy of Alvanio, by insidiously mingling with these, the triumph of the more fortunate Marchese, and the felicity he enjoyed in so enviable a union. By these, and a number of similar artifices, he at length worked up the passions of the Count almost to madness.

“After this interview, the criminal affection of the unfortunate Alvanio was a subject which wholly engrossed himself; and, as it promised to favour his own views, was now
scarcely

scarcely less thought of by Hernandez. Day after day they wandered out on the mountains, for hours together; the Count still lamenting his own unhappy fate, and Hernandez using every argument his unprincipled mind could suggest, to induce him to gratify his love and revenge, by carrying off the Marchesa, proposing to give him every assistance in the execution of such a project.

CHAP. IV.

“THE Count Alvanio was not yet so completely entangled in vice, as to listen patiently to the sophisticated arguments used by Hernandez, nor to afford his least concurrence to the base measure proposed
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by him ; the latter, therefore, after a fortnight passed in vain attempts to undermine the remaining share of rectitude which still dwelt in the bosom of his friend, found that he had rendered him only more wretched, without bringing him nearer to the point he had in view.

“ Inwardly incensed at the resistance of the Count, Hernandez was more than half inclined to put him out of the way ; were this accomplished, he thought he might afterwards obtain the hand of the Countess, and then dispose of her son as he had done of the husband and father. While ruminating on this horrid subject, an idea occurred, which renovated his former hopes, and caused him to relinquish his late plan.

“ Affecting the utmost concern for the Count, he now earnestly entreated him to quit the castle, and thus avoid a solitude, which, by cherishing his unfortunate passion, had already proved injurious, and would at length effectually destroy his
peace

peace of mind and health, offering at the same time to supply him with a sum nearly sufficient to arrange his affairs.

“ To the great joy of Hernandez, this seemingly-friendly offer was received with transport ; and Alvanio, in the vain hope of flying from himself, quickly hastened back to Madrid, after discharging every servant usually kept in the castle, except two ancient domestics, who were retained there merely to keep it aired. This last step was taken by the advice of Hernandez, who forcibly represented the folly of keeping a large number of idle dependants, when the expenditure they occasioned could be much better employed in means calculated to alleviate the sorrows of the Count. The Countess, who grieved much at this circumstance, did not accompany her Lord to the metropolis, but, under the plea of indisposition, retired, with her infant son, to an estate near Seragosa. Her real motive was, however, to bewail there
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in secret the coldness and neglect of the man she had selected as the partner of her life.

“ Immediately after their arrival at Madrid, Hernandez and the Count renewed their acquaintance with the Rimaldis. Alvanio now plunged more eagerly than ever into dissipation. Hernandez, inwardly exulting, beheld him pursue this course, while he affected to lament *that* grief, the amelioration of which required such excesses.

“ The Countess Rimaldi soon became the confident of the Count’s secret, and what all the arguments of Hernandez had failed to effect, she at length accomplished. Fascinating and seducing pictures of happiness were so ably drawn by this artful and insinuating woman, that the Count listened with less and less reluctance to her discourse, the motive of which had even at first appeared obvious to him ; nor had the hints she repeatedly threw out, that no man of spirit, and possessed of so enlightened an understanding as the Count, would tamely

tamely submit to be the slave of a passion so ardent, when he had the means of rendering himself, and possibly the Marchesa happy, by exerting a proper degree of courage and perseverance, a less hurtful effect on the mind of Alvanio, than the former.

“ In short, by the pernicious counsel of this abandoned woman, the repugnance of the Count was gradually subdued; and each day the wish of possessing the Marchesa grew stronger; and the means to be employed for the attainment of this object, became more familiar to the deluded Alvanio, whose resistance to the machinations of his female adviser, in conjunction with those of Hernandez, had now become so weak, that he was hourly expected to yield his assent to whatever plan should be proposed for carrying off the Marchesa, when a circumstance occurred which at once decided the matter.

“ A confidential servant of Don Hernandez having obtained his Lord's permission

mission to visit a relation who resided in a village, situated in an obscure vale, at the foot of the Pyrenees, hastily returned with the intelligence of his having discovered the retreat of Don Alphonso de Avilla, and Victoria de Gironne : this discovery, which was communicated only to Hernandez, filled him with malicious delight. Resolving to get Victoria, if possible, within his power, he dispatched his servant back to the village, with instructions to keep a strict watch over the unfortunate pair, until he himself had concerted a plan for the above purpose. A few hours after the man departed, as Hernandez was hastening unattended to the Countess Rimaldi's private villa, he was accosted, in an obscure street, by an old Jew, who merely asked if his name was Marino? On receiving an answer in the affirmative, he presented a small billet, and instantly disappeared. The surprise this incident excited in Hernandez was considerably heightened, when, on opening

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ing the paper, he found it contained a few lines from Zanga, in which the writer informed Hernandez, that, in a few days, he should be at the usual place, and requested to know whether he could make it convenient to hasten thither? An answer was required, which was to be forwarded by means of the Jew, whose fidelity might be depended on: nevertheless the Moor thought it expedient to recommend secrecy respecting the caverns, as the Israelite had no knowledge of them.

“ Hernandez had scarcely perused this epistle, when the Jew re-appeared, and pointing to a mean-looking house, whispered him to send the answer there at a certain hour which he mentioned. Hernandez having promised to observe these directions, proceeded to the villa; there he found the Count Alvanio alone with the Countess, and in a disposition but too favourable to the black designs of his unprincipled associates; and too evidently so, for either of them not to make use of the
advantage

advantage such a frame of mind afforded. The lovely Marchesa had been the topic of discourse before Hernandez entered; and he had scarcely taken a seat, when the subject was resumed by the Countess. The astonishment she affected at the triumph which the Marchese di Romanzini had obtained over a numerous train of suitors, many of whom were younger and superior in birth and fortune to himself, gave Hernandez a fair opportunity of reverting to those times, when, as Alvanio had frequently asserted, his hopes were partly sanctioned by his illustrious relative, the Duke di Orenza. Having ironically touched on this subject, he proceeded to ridicule the scruples of the Count, accused him of pusillanimous weakness, and derided him for what he called a contemptible submission to a usurpation of his rights, and which he had it in his power to crush.

‘Will you,’ continued he, repeating an argument which he had been long in the habit of using—‘will you still suffer this

Di Romanzini to revel in love and wealth, which might have been your's? But for him, Adelaide di Orenza must have crowned your hopes. Tear her from the arms of that specious villain; and make yourself master also of the fate of the young Vivonio. The Marchesa once your's, wherefore suffer the offspring of that detested Di Romanzini to possess that wealth which, were the boy out of the way, would descend to you and your son? Besides, what have you to fear? I will arrange and execute the plan, which will be productive of so much happiness to you, my friend; and as there can be little doubt of success, it remains only to fix on some place wherein you may conceal the lovely Marchesa: in my opinion, Riverra is excellently suited to the purpose;—in the deserted chambers of the south tower, we can place the charming Adelaide, till your tender assiduities have reconciled her to her fate. Of her son, we will speak hereafter. I am well acquainted with the most
private

private entrances to the south wing of the castle, and from the two old domestics there, we have nothing to dread. Our lovely friend, the Countess, consents to become the companion and consoler of the Marchesa, who, I doubt not, will soon cease to regret her separation from the tame religious bigot, Di Romanzini.—But why should I argue thus? The *means* of accomplishing your wishes, are in your own power; determine quickly then, and be no longer the poor, miserable, pining Alvanio, but the man who nobly dares to follow the dictates of *love and revenge.*'

“ This detestable advice being now strongly enforced, with all the subtle arguments of a fiend, by the Countess Rimaldi, finally prevailed :—the voice of conscience was completely silenced, and the remains of virtue banished from the breast of the deluded Count. His senses agitated, his reason obscured by repeated goblets of wine, he gave a full consent; and leaving the entire arrangement and execution

of the abominable plot now formed against the happiness of the most virtuous and noble family of Di Romanzini, to his execrable associates, he returned to his own home, madly exulting in the triumph which vice had gained over the little honour he once possessed.

“ It may appear singular, but it is no less true, that the *Countess Rimaldi* proposed to carry this plan into execution. Attachment to Hernandez, and a willingness to serve his friend, were the motives she assigned for this strange resolve ; but she had private reasons, far different, and of a most important nature, to induce her to act thus, and these reasons were as follows :—The Count Rimaldi and herself had of late been engaged in several dark transactions, which they feared would not long escape the notice of the Holy Office ; and therefore both were impatient to quit Madrid, and fly that punishment they justly dreaded. Not unacquainted with these apprehensions, Hernandez, who had found
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this degenerate pair but too faithful to his own villainies, and who wished to render them further subservient to his views, had often regretted his not having the power to offer them, in case their circumstances absolutely required it, a refuge in the secret caverns of San Stephano, and had as frequently thrown out hints to this effect, which were listened to with so much pleasure, that, at length, he revealed part of his adventures in the caverns to the depraved Countess, who never rested till she had prevailed on him to place an entire confidence in her, and also to promise, should flight become indispensably necessary, to conceal Rimaldi and herself in those dark regions—a promise which Hernandez might have easily performed, as admittance to the caverns could have been privately obtained, by means of the secret passage which opens on the rocky creek; and here the Countess imagined that she and her husband might remain, while concealment should be necessary, in

impenetrable obscurity, safe from the pursuits of justice, and equally free from apprehensions of the Moors, who, it was supposed, had taken a final leave of the caverns. It was not the intention of the Rimaldis, however, to fly to this gloomy seclusion, unless the certainty of impending danger should compel them to repair thither; and it was more with the view of having such a secret asylum in reserve, than from any immediate cause for alarm, that the Countess engaged Hernandez to promise his assistance to procure her this retreat, as the only confident in the business, which the Rimaldis so much dreaded being made known, was at that period absent from Spain; yet as his return was daily looked for, they well knew that unless they again acceded, as they had hitherto done, to the most extravagant pecuniary demands, they had every thing to fear from the treachery of a wretch equally wicked as themselves.

“ Hernandez, from the moment he had
committed

committed to this abandoned woman a secret which he had bound himself, by the most tremendous oaths, never to divulge, and which he had never breathed to the Count Alvania, had scarcely ever ceased regretting the imprudent confidence he had reposed in her ; but never so severely as when he found that his infidel associates had again resorted to the caverns. On reflection, however, she appeared to have ever shewn so decided a preference for himself, and seemed also to be an agent so well calculated for forwarding, and even accomplishing his designs on Alvania, that he soon became reconciled to what was past recall. It was under a firm persuasion that her arts would effect what his had failed to do, that he prevailed on the Count to return to Madrid. Soon after his arrival there, Hernandez had a private interview with the Countess, who then informed him that the person she had so much cause to fear had just returned, and had not only renewed, but increased his

pecuniary demands, to so exorbitant a degree, that it would shortly be out of Rimaldi's, or her power, to satisfy them ; and thus circumstanced, she apprehended she would soon be compelled to claim the fulfilment of his promise.

“ Hernandez, who would now have submitted to the hardest conditions to ensure the secrecy of the Countess, inwardly rejoiced at the terrifying apprehensions which suggested the necessity of seeking refuge in the caverns ; resolving, however, that if once she became an inmate of these, she should remain so for life, he cheerfully agreed to convey her thither, whenever she should require this service. Then, having communicated to her the plan he had formed against Alvanio, he requested her aid to carry it into effect. In this scheme the Countess readily engaged ; and it was now settled that whenever the Count should be brought to give his consent to the detestable project against the honour and happiness of the Marchesa, the following

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ing hour should be that on which the Countess was to bid adieu to Madrid. This fatal consent had now been obtained, and she openly avowed to Alvanio a purpose, which she had privately and invariably declared to Hernandez, and which was no other than to assist in person the execution of the horrible scheme.

“ The certainty Hernandez now had of the Moors still continuing to frequent the caverns, might have deterred him from the thought of introducing strangers there, had he not firmly depended on the uncommon beauty and fascinating manners of the Countess; the first he felt assured would not fail to make a deep impression on Zanga, and the latter he had no doubt would secure her conquest. That a scrupulous delicacy was not on her part to be apprehended, her amours had sufficiently testified; there was, therefore, no fear of her not preferring splendid security, though held out by an infidel, to running the hazard of being brought before the tribu-

nal of the Inquisition, which it was most probable, were she to continue longer on the surface of the globe, would be the fate of herself and Rimaldi. However strongly attached the Countess was to Hernandez, she had never been an object of serious attention to him; therefore he felt no more concern about any new connexion she might form, than he had at those temporary ones by which her establishment had been principally supported. As for the feelings of Rimaldi, they were wholly disregarded; for his wife held so absolute a dominion over him, and he was himself such a slave to avarice, that there was very little, if any, opposition to be expected from a man so governed, and whose principles were all absorbed in the love of gain. It was, however, too hazardous a point to inform the Rimaldis of the Moors return to the caverns, as Hernandez naturally dreaded that the fear of being carried into slavery would deter them from going thither; and their remaining at liberty, or
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their falling into the power of the Holy Office, either circumstance was particularly dangerous to himself: in the former, the Countess might not always observe the secrecy she hitherto had done, and, in the latter, their just sufferings in those deep prisons to which their crimes had brought them, might induce them to disclose the secret of his correspondence with the infidels, and thereby involve him in destruction. When, therefore, the Countess entreated an asylum in the caverns, he promised to comply with her wishes, but continued silent on the subject connected with the place; and when she afterwards insisted on taking a leading part in the execution of the black design against the Marchesa, he merely informed her, that, when arrived at the Castle de Riverra, she would find a vessel already prepared for the enterprise, and faithful assistants, who would implicitly follow her instructions.

“ The misguided Alvanio had quitted the villa two hours only, when the Rimal-

dis, attended by a highly-favoured confidential servant, bade a long and last adieu to Madrid, and proceeded on their journey to Barcelona ; at a small village, a few miles beyond which, they were, according to the instructions they had received from Hernandez, to wait until he should have joined them. Too circumspect to be present at their departure, he had delayed only to give his final orders to them, and to write a few lines for Zanga, and then took his leave, about an hour previous to their quitting the metropolis.

“ As Hernandez passed through the dark streets, the clock of the cathedral struck the third hour of the morning : it was that on which the Jew expected the answer for the Moor. Having easily found the lowly habitation of the Israelite, who was waiting his arrival, Hernandez, muffled up in a long dark cloak, gave the billet, accompanied with a small purse of ducats, into his hand, and walked on till he reached his own residence, where, after seeking a
few

few hours sleep, he arose, elated with the hopes of soon possessing both Victoria and the Castle de Riverra.

“ The day was rather advanced when he hastened to the chamber of the Count Alvanio, whom he found pale, perturbed, and dejected—the very image of fear and irresolution. Not yet so hardened in vice, as to be callous to the upbraidings of a half-silenced conscience, he had not, now that he had recovered his reason, been able to reflect on what he had acceded to, on the preceding evening, without being partly inclined to retract his assent. Hernandez scrutinized his looks, and while his bosom swelled with internal pleasure at the certainty, that, if the signs of repentance he observed were real, it was now too late, he in a few words informed the Count that the Rimaldis had left Madrid, and were now on their journey, in order to accomplish his wishes.

“ Alvanio returned no answer ; but the pale hue of remorse became more evident
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on his features. Hernandez, whose concern it was not to let this feeling become predominant, again had recourse to his usual arguments; and when these had taken some effect, he soon banished contrition from the breast of the Count, by representing to him the happiness likely to result from the steps which his *friends* were on the point of taking.

“ Having succeeded thus far in his insidious endeavours. to bring the mind of Alvanio to the disposition he wished, and eager to commence those operations which related solely to his own private views, Hernandez, after pleading many excuses for having so long concealed a secret, which, in justice to their friendship, he said, ought to have been long since revealed, communicated to the Count the passion he felt for Victoria, and the intention he had formed of getting her into his own power; and at length requested his permission to conceal her in the Castle de Riverra.

“ Alvanio.

“ Alvanio was amazed and confounded at the insulting presumption of this request. A thousand tormenting suspicions of having been made the dupe of his treacherous friend, and his vile instruments, crossed his agitated mind. A few indirect and unconnected exclamations were, however, the only utterance he gave his feelings; but these were sufficient to discover what was passing in his breast to Hernandez, who, determined to persevere, once more had recourse to all that delusive sophistry which flowed so eloquently from his deceitful lips, to lull these suspicions, and to attain the end at which he now aimed. The weak Alvanio was again overcome. Already the timid slave of vice, he could no longer resist the destructive sway; and Hernandez having without much difficulty soothed him to his own purpose, at length prevailed upon him to *sell the castle*.

‘ If the dreary towers of Riverra own me for their Lord,’ he continued, ‘ they will
will

will afford a most certain concealment for the lovely Marchesa. Should the Duke di Orenza or Di Romanzini glance the slightest suspicion towards you, where would they seek the charming Adelaide, but within those walls? The castle once my property, they durst not intrude; nor would they imagine that, having parted with the castle, you could possibly place her there. I am well acquainted with all its most secret recesses, and will pledge my life to secure you from detection, if you resign to me your rights in the domain. The proposal I make cannot require your long consideration: the advantages that will accrue to yourself, by relinquishing De Riverra, are too obvious not to strike you; for your own sake then comply with my request, and then, my friend, years of happiness, in the society of the enchanting Adelaide, and my Victoria, will be our recompence for all the fears and vexations we now endure.'

“ It were useless to repeat the remainder

der of the base arguments employed on this occasion—Suffice it, the Count Alvania, too imbecile to nobly renounce his design on the Marchesa, too long habituated to look up to the artful Hernandez for advice and support in every occurrence, could reply only with feeble hesitation to whatever was urged by this deceptive and specious hypocrite; and being at length induced to fully accede to all his proposals, he that day legally transferred his rights and claims to the castle and domain of Riverra to Hernandez, and for a consideration by no means equivalent to the real value of the purchase.

“ Overjoyed at his success, and having no further point to gain, Hernandez, when the business was concluded, bade adieu to his infatuated and deluded friend; and shortly after, set off to join the Rimaldis, and also to take possession of his new estate.

“ When arrived in disguise at the little village where the Rimaldis awaited his appearance, he found them, both as carefully
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fully disguised as himself, at a mud hovel, dignified by the name of the principal possada in the village. From thence they proceeded all together on the remainder of the journey—the Rimaldis exulting in the speedy termination of their fears, and Hernandez inwardly triumphing in the certainty of soon having them completely in his own power.

“ The darkness of the night on which they reached the castle, was favourable to concealment. Hernandez conducted his companions through a low postern gate, which opened on the south wing. All was silent and gloomy. The servant of Rimaldi now lit a torch, with materials he had brought for the purpose, and Hernandez led the way, through several long and dreary passages, and up a few flights of steps, to his own apartments. Here he paused, and carefully securing the door, requested his companions to wait there a short time, while he examined the caverns, at the same moment expressing an apprehension

hension that the Moors were returned thither.

“ At this suggestion gloom and terror suddenly pervaded the faces of Rimaldi and his servant; but the Countess, to the amazement, and no less to the secret joy of Hernandez, declared that if he would guarantee their safety, she should have no objection to joining his infidel friends, as any thing was preferable to the horrid punishments the Inquisition might inflict. This timely hint silenced the fears and discontent of Rimaldi, who soon began mentally calculating how much he might increase his ill-gotten wealth by turning renegado. The servant, shrinking from the dread of the Holy Office, thought that should it even come to the worst, slavery was better than the torture he deserved. In short, as not one of the whole party had any religious scruple to quell, each of the fugitives was secretly of opinion, that, by embracing Mahometanism,

ism, a residence in Barbary might be rendered very tolerable.

“ When, therefore, Hernandez, in reply to the declaration of the Countess, said he admired her courage, and that he thought he might be answerable for the safety of them all, she exclaimed—

‘ And do you, Marino, really think that *I* am your dupe?—No, my penetration equals your own. I was prepared for this circumstance. I know your friends *are* returned, and it is by their means you intend to carry off the Marchesa, for that fool Alvanio; ’tis their vessel that is at your disposal: thus far I am certain in this respect. As to what relates to ourselves, I confess I am yet ignorant. Answer then with truth.—Do you mean to *sell* us to these Moors? if so, you imagined you were betraying us to such a fate; but know, we prefer even *that* alternative to encountering the terrors of the Inquisition.’

“ Hernandez,

“ Hernandez, though not a little surprised and confounded at this speech, instantly protested that he had not used the least treachery, and confirmed this protestation by the most horrid oaths.

‘ It is well,’ returned the Countess. ‘ Conduct us to the caverns. If I like your friends, I will still contribute my aid in the completion of the plan against the wife of Di Romanzini.’

“ Hernandez hesitated, then represented to her the propriety of his first preparing the Moors for the reception of the strangers.

‘ We will not remain in this apartment,’ cried she, in reply.

‘ Why not?’ demanded Hernandez. ‘ You have nothing to apprehend here: there are only two aged domestics in the castle, and they inhabit a distant part.’

‘ It matters not,’ replied she. ‘ Lead us to the vaults. We will there await your return.’

“ Hernandez, immediately complying
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with this request, ordered the servant to light another torch, and bearing that himself, he led the way till they reached the vault which communicates with the caverns. Here he quitted his companions, and proceeded to join the Moors, whom he found anxiously awaiting his arrival. After the first salutations, he briefly informed them all of his success with the Count, and added, that as he was now owner of the castle, they might, whilst he lived, retain undisturbed possession of the caverns. The barbarous scheme of carrying off the Marchesa next became the subject of discourse, in the course of which he artfully mentioned the Rimaldis, and intimated that there was an absolute necessity for admitting them, as instruments essential to the execution of the plan.

“ The Moors, disapproving of his proposing to introduce new associates to their notice, became enraged and sullen ; but the persuasive arguments Hernandez now used, soon appeased their wrath. He re-
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presented the Rimaldis, and their confidential servant, as persons so much superior to prejudice, as to have avowedly dissented from the doctrine of the mother church; and from this difference, in opinion had been obliged to fly Madrid, where, had they remained but a few hours longer than they did, they could not have escaped the fate of those unhappy people called heretics, whose passage from this world is lighted by the flames of an *Auto de Fe*.

‘ Will you then refuse these poor fugitives your protection?’ he continued. ‘ They are willing to confide in you, and, possessing spirits like yourselves, are anxiously desirous of becoming your associates. They are ready to put themselves entirely in your power, by accompanying you in your voyage to Naples, and taking the lead in your enterprise there.’

“ The nature of this appeal, and more especially the hatred which these infidels feel for the *just* proceedings of the Holy Office, induced the Moors to consent to receive

receive the Rimaldis and their faithful servant, though with this proviso, that Hernandez should not expect they were to shew to them the same attentions they did to himself.

“ In answer to this condition, Hernandez assured them that his friends would never become a burden to the society, as they themselves were possessed of considerable wealth.

“ The importance of the foregoing subject, and the energy with which Hernandez discoursed on it, had as yet prevented his enquiry for Zelima; but when the debate ceased, he eagerly asked Zanga where she was. The answer he received was, that she had died soon after he last saw her. This information Hernandez easily perceived was false; but as it suited his purpose to seem to afford it credence, he affected deep regret, which the crafty Moor spared him the pain of long dissembling, by changing the melancholy subject to one relative to some new plunder, and
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the one best calculated to revive the spirits of his attentive hearer.

“ Having received permission to introduce the Rimaldis, Hernandez returned to the vault, and conducted them from thence to the caverns, which they entered with unfeigned joy, inwardly hailing them as an abode into which the eye of justice would never penetrate.

“ The Moors received them with a kind of half sullen scrutiny, and immediately proposed the tremendous oaths of secrecy, which were readily agreed to, and emphatically pronounced by each of the new associates.

“ A plenteous banquet ensued, during which the fascinating charms and alluring attractions of the Countess produced their usual effects; and but a few hours had elapsed when it evidently appeared that Zanga had become enchanted with her, to the no small satisfaction of herself, who, from this circumstance, augured the most certain prospect of safety and wealth.

“ Assured of success in the meditated enterprise, it was finally settled, during these hours of riotous dissipation, that the Marchesa di Romanzini should be accommodated in a suite of chambers in the south wing, and which were immediately to be fitted up with the splendid furniture now in the *depôt*, and of which the Moors had lately stripped several villas, in some late descents on the coasts. This arrangement being agreed upon, the discourse turned on the Count Alvanio; and after many a loud laugh at his expence, Zanga highly applauded the discretion Hernandez had shewn, in not entrusting so pusillanimous a fellow with the least circumstance relative to the caverns.

“ The approach to the south wing was convenient for the present purpose, as the stone stairs that lead from the vaults up to the apartments of Hernandez, communicate also with the south tower; the Moors therefore had no difficulty in conveying to the former such furniture and decorations

as Hernandez required. Three days were employed in removing the old furniture and decayed ornaments found in the chambers selected by Hernandez, and arranging, in their stead, the superb modern articles brought from the caverns. Meanwhile, the influence which the Rimaldis had acquired over the infidels rapidly increased, and they vied with each other in shewing them attentions.

“ Late in the evening of the third day, the preparations in the apartments of the south wing being completed, the Rimaldis and their domestic embarked on board the brigantine for Italy, attended by the fervent good wishes of Hernandez, who, on the following morning, quitted the castle, by the private passages, and demanded entrance at the great gate. The two ancient domestics left in charge of the vast edifice, received him with pleasure and respect. These he informed that the castle was now his own property, producing, at the same time, the writings which proved the legality

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lity of his claim. Reserving for his favourite servant, Pedro, the full arrangement of his household, he gave orders for a few domestics only to be engaged for the present; and after having remained about an hour at the castle, he set off for the village where dwelt Alphonso and Victoria. Here he soon found the private abode of Pedro, who had faithfully observed his Lord's directions; and in this meeting a scheme was devised, to alarm and frighten this unfortunate pair from their lowly habitation. Hernandez, leaving the management of this plot to his servant, quickly left him, and returned to the castle.

“ A snare was now spread for the unsuspecting Alphonso, which he too soon fell into. The alarm, terror, and confusion into which he was thrown by the contents of an anonymous letter, seemingly written by a friend interested in his safety, induced him to follow the advice with which the deceptive scroll concluded; and taking his wife and an infant daughter, he
abandoned

abandoned their hitherto secure retreat, and having pursued the track pointed out to his observance by his unknown and most insidious adviser, was at length met by Hernandez, in disguise, Pedro, and two Moors, who had staid for this purpose, in a wood, at no considerable distance from the castle. Suddenly surrounding the wretched fugitives, a violent blow on the head bereft Alphonso of life, whose body was immediately afterwards thrown over the cliffs into the sea. Victoria, in a state of insensibility, and her child, were then conveyed in a boat to the castle, and placed in the apartments which had been prepared for the reception of the Marchesa, till whose arrival it was the intention of Hernandez that she should remain there, and afterwards be removed to the caverns.

“ His thoughts and his attention wholly engaged by the almost distracted Victoria, before whom he appeared under the assumed name of Don Felix de Romna, Hernandez had ceased to remember the

Count Alvanio, when he was surprised by the arrival of the latter.

“ Alvanio had anxiously awaited a summons from Hernandez, who had promised, should the enterprise, on which the Moors were now gone, succeed, to send immediate intelligence to him ; and finding the time had elapsed which he judged sufficient for the execution of the horrible design, and out of all patience at the continued silence of his friend, he journeyed with the utmost expedition to the castle, to learn the cause of this, to him, alarming circumstance.

“ As Hernandez still persevered in observing a profound secrecy respecting the Moors, all the information Alvanio could obtain from him now was, that he had engaged a vessel for the undertaking, on board which the Rimaldis had embarked, and that the return of the former was daily expected.

“ Neither was he less reserved in whatever related to Victoria, whom he kept
closely

closely confined in the south wing: her residence there being alike unknown to the Count and the household, except Pedro and an aged female, who, from having the misfortune to be both deaf and dumb, Hernandez had chosen for the attendant of this unfortunate lady.

“ While the Count was in this incertitude, sometimes compelled to silence the weak upbraidings of a conscience half steeled against remorse, by recurring to the sophisticated reasonings of Hernandez, but much oftener felicitating himself with the prospect of soon having the charming Marchesa in his own power (for being in the habit of corresponding with his uncle, the Duke di Orenza, he knew that the Marchese and Marchesa were now at their villa near Pausilipo, and which, from its vicinity to the sea, seemed favourable to the project), the Rimaldis, who had learned from Alvania the immediate residence of the noble family, had arrived at their destination; and having landed un-

der cover of night, prepared to commence their vile operations. Disguised as Lazaroni, they continued for two days hovering about the villa, and stealing, when its inmates had retired to rest, through the grounds belonging to it, taking as exact a survey of every object they came nigh, and every place they passed through, as the duskiness of the hour would permit. The object which principally attracted their attention was a small Grecian temple, partly encompassed by groves of myrtle and almond trees. At the extremity of one of these groves, was an unfrequented path, which led through a woody glen, and terminated at the sea side; by following the windings of this path, which was almost obscured by the interwoven branches of the trees that enclosed it on each side, the Rimaldis and their servant had gained access to the interior parts of the domain. The day had just begun to dawn, as they approached this temple, and the Countess, eager to examine the inside of it,

it, tried to obtain entrance. The door, however, was locked ; but looking through one of the windows, she perceived a lute, and several open music-books, laying on a table, which stood close to the window. Wanting no further proof to convince her of this place being sometimes frequented by the Marchesa, and feeling a malignant hope that it would not be long ere she again repaired thither, the Countess determined to keep strict watch near a spot, which, from its remote and retired situation, seemed peculiarly adapted for the executing of her fell design.

“ Having secreted themselves during the day, as the evening advanced, the Countess ventured to emerge from her place of concealment, and drawing nearer to the temple, she beheld, through an opening between the trees, which screened herself from view, the Marchesa seated at a window, and her attention wholly engaged by a book she was reading. As it was evident that the unfortunate lady was alone,

a concerted signal was immediately given by the Countess, which apprised her base accomplices of this circumstance, and they hastened towards her. Ordering the servant to keep watch at the entrance, the Rimaldis rushed into the temple—the Marchesa, alarmed, started from her chair, demanding the cause of this intrusion. Scarcely had she spoke, when the inhuman wretches seized her by the arms, and having thrust a handkerchief into her mouth, dragged her towards the door. At that moment the man who had been on the watch, gave the alarm, saying, he had seen some person at a distance, who seemed to be advancing to the spot. Rimaldi instantly relinquished his hold of the fainting Marchesa, and fled. The woman, infuriated by disappointment, dashed her to the ground, and was hastening away, when, perceiving the key in the door, she paused a moment to lock it, and aware that, by preventing immediate admittance to the temple, pursuit would of course be delayed,

delayed, she secured the key, and flew after her base accomplices. Having reached the boat in safety, they were all soon on board the brigantine.—But here the wicked and restless spirit of the female, or more properly, fiend in human shape, permitted her not long to remain.—Disguised as pilgrims, she and her iniquitous companions again went on shore, and having repaired to a small auberge, where they passed for palmers returning from some holy shrine, they soon understood, from the unfeigned lamentations of the people around them, that the Marchesa had lately expired, and that the Marchese in consequence had become deranged.

“ Though hardened in vice, the men felt shocked at this dreadful information; but the woman, with diabolic pleasure, exulted in the melancholy fate of the Marchesa, and the deep affliction into which that lamentable event had involved the illustrious family.

“ Not satisfied with the calamities she
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had already been the cause of, she resolved on striking, if possible, a second blow, which would aggravate the sorrows of the mourning survivors.

“ Quitting the auberge, they slowly proceeded till they had reached a retired spot, from whence they hastened to the place where they had left the boat, in which they remained concealed amongst the rocks till the night had advanced, then sailed back to the creek from which they had before landed; and having previously thrown off the pilgrims’ habits, they awaited the arrival of the hour, when it might be supposed that all hurry and confusion had subsided at the villa.

“ The bell of a neighbouring convent had just began to chime for midnight prayers, when they left the boat, and proceeded towards the house of affliction and mourning. Here Rimaldi, following the instructions of his vile directress, opened one of the lower windows, through which he passed, and, without meeting the least interruption,

ruption, found his way to the chamber of the young Vivonio, and which, by having several times seen the lovely boy in the arms of his nurse, at the windows of this apartment, Rimaldi but too well surmised was solely appropriated to his use.

“ After some opposition from the nurse, whose cries were prevented by her own terrors, and the threats of Rimaldi, he succeeded in carrying off the child without disturbing his repose. The moment the woman saw the babe, she caught him in her arms, and, followed by Rimaldi, returned with speed to the boat, where, warmly wrapping the pilgrims' habits round the still sleeping child, she sat with him on her knee, while the men used the utmost exertion at the oars. In a short time they reached the rocky cave, where the vessel lay concealed. On the base enterprisers being taken on board, the Moors immediately put to sea; not a little pleased at being released from the hazard they had run, in having remained for nearly three days hovering about the Italian Isles.

CHAP.

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“ON the evening of the day succeeding to that on which the Count Alvanio arrived at the castle, the corsair returned. Hernandez had just retired to his chamber for the night, when one of the Moors entered by the private door, and gave him notice of the latter circumstance. Immediately hastening to the caverns, he found Zanga and the Rimaldis partaking of the refreshments with which the table was spread. By no means surprised at not perceiving the Marchesa in the group, as he imagined she had not yet been removed from the vessel, he was preparing to congratulate his

his emissaries on their success, when the infant Vivonio, who then lay sleeping on a sofa, caught his attention. This sight confirmed him in the belief that the whole of their horrible designs had been accomplished, and, with an air of satisfaction, he exclaimed—

‘Admirable skill!—You have secured the boy too, I perceive. The Marchesa—Where is she?’

“In answer to this hasty interrogatory, he received a full account of the failure of the plot on the lady, and the melancholy consequences which had ensued from the attempt to carry her off.

“Hernandez at first seemed rather affected by this shocking intelligence, but afterwards could not help acknowledging that he considered the death of the Marchesa as an event highly advantageous to himself.

‘Since you departed on the enterprise,’ he added, ‘I have often regretted the necessity of admitting her into the
castle,

castle, where she would have undoubtedly been a peculiarly troublesome and dangerous inmate.'

"Turning his eyes on the sleeping innocent, he paused; and, while contemplating the beauty and serenity of its countenance, he inwardly exulted in the certainty of having in *him* a complete check on the Count.

'We must soon inform Alvanio,' continued he, 'of your ill success respecting the lady; but remember to be prepared for his weak lamentations. 'Tis probable that the news of her death may awaken his conscience, and then we have every thing to dread from his silly remorse, which might incline him to reveal the share we have had in the late transaction. It were best therefore to secrete the child; and when the Count shall know of your having brought him off, it will be necessary to teach him to believe that the infant died on the passage. Persuaded of that having really happened, he will, for his own sake,
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be compelled to remain silent. When the interview with him is over, you may return to the caverns for the child, whom you may place in a small chamber, on the ground floor of the south tower, where he may continue, till I have decided on what shall be done with him.'

"After some further discourse on the above subject, Hernandez conducted the Rimaldis to the apartment of the Count, who, occupied by his own reflections, had not yet retired to repose. The gloomy looks which these agents of iniquity had assumed, preparatory to the sad communications they had to make, produced the intended effect on Alvanio; but though thus prepared for what was to follow, the horror which seized him on hearing the fate of the Marchesa, nearly deprived him of motion. When he had recovered the power of speech, he loaded himself with the bitterest reproaches for having suffered the persuasions of those around him to influence

influence him to become a party concerned in the late barbarous plot.

‘ But though the loveliest of her sex,’ he added, ‘ has fallen a sacrifice to my weak compliance, yet I trust that her child is still under the protection of his father.’

“ Hernandez, who inwardly trembled with fear, lest the Count should continue in his present frame of mind, thought it highly expedient to remove the blame of what had been done from himself, by laying it all on him.

‘ Wherefore,’ demanded he, ‘ did you consent to the measure, but to obtain the gratification of a passion which rendered you miserable? Of what avail are your self-upbraidings *now*, or your unjustly charging with your own crimes, those who hazarded even life to serve you? Will either exculpate you to Di Romanzini, or the world? The child too, about whose safety you appear so anxious, did not you regard him as the bar to your succession?

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That obstacle is now removed. You agreed to his being taken from his parent, and he was so ; and died on the passage hither. You are now informed of all,' added Hernandez, 'and unless you wish to proclaim yourself to the world as the author of the whole of the contrivances, you will henceforth impose an eternal silence on your own lips respecting either circumstance.'

" The consternation and anguish depicted in the pale countenance of the Count, as he listened to this speech, so unjust and insulting, recalled Hernandez to a sense of his own imprudence. The most complete villain is not always on his guard : there are moments when the innate baseness of a depraved mind *cannot* be concealed.—The artful Marino now found himself in this predicament. Suddenly restored to self-command, he turned to the Rimaldis, and desired them to withdraw. When they had retired, after pacing the room for a few moments, in apparent agitation,

agitation, he approached the Count, who still sat the silent image of despair, and said—

‘ Pardon the unjustifiable warmth I have just shewn. Believe me, my friend, I intended not to reproach you; but your excessive concern, your unavailing regret, so deranged my ideas, and distressed me, that I spoke at random. Alvanio, it is wrong to spend the hours in sorrow, for that which cannot be recalled. Are we answerable for the death of a woman, whose weak timidity——’

“ Here he was interrupted by the Count, who tremulously besought him to desist, nor utter the least reflection on the memory of the angelic Adelaide, whom they had murdered! His expressions of grief then became so violent, and so often repeated, that Hernandez was, for near two hours, employed in endeavouring to sooth the distraction of his mind; when, at length, he became rather more composed, he expressed the strongest fears of the
Rimaldis,

Rimaldis, who, it was possible, he said, might yet betray Hernandez and himself to the Orenza family.

‘ From that danger we are entirely secure,’ returned Marino; ‘ for these faithful agents, eager to recommend themselves to our friendship, by their zeal in your service, have, with their own hands, destroyed the young Vivonio, and——’

“ Ere Hernandez had concluded this horrid speech, the wretched Count heaved a deep sigh, and sunk senseless on the floor.

“ With restored recollection came all the horrors of guilt, accompanied by the keenest pangs of remorse, which, combined, threw the unfortunate Alvanio into a truly pitiable condition, and had so powerful an effect on his health, that he was, for several days, confined to his chamber, in a delirious state, during which time no person but Hernandez and his confidential servant, Pedro, was allowed to enter the apartment; for as the Count was incessantly

cessantly raving about the Marchesa di Romanzini, and the infant Vivonio, and accusing the Rimaldis and Hernandez, as the murderers of both, it was impossible for the latter to suffer any one, but the servant whose fidelity he could rely on, to approach the room, without exposing himself to extreme peril; besides, he was far from wishing the recovery of Alvanio; on the contrary, his death appeared the more desirable event, as then all apprehensions of the dangerous consequences of his remorse would have expired with him.

“ Notwithstanding the want of medical aid, and the indifferent attendance during his illness, the Count recovered; and the moment he imagined himself able to travel, he quitted the castle, and proceeded to his own estate, near Seragosa.

“ Thus relieved from a guest whom, because he feared, he hated, Hernandez was now at full liberty to prosecute his designs on the unfortunate Victoria, and to meditate at leisure on the methods best
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to be pursued in the future disposal of the young Vivonio.

“Meanwhile, the Countess, whose agency was necessary for the accomplishment of his base views respecting Victoria, was entrusted by Hernandez with the knowledge of every particular relative to that lady ; and so absolute was the power he had gained over the vicious mind of this woman, that, instead of discovering either rage or jealousy at being rivalled in his regard, she readily engaged to become his emissary in this new scheme of villainy ; and was accordingly introduced by him to Victoria, as his near relative, and under the assumed name of Donna Theresa de Romna.

“ Too constantly employed in uniting his artifices to those used by the Countess, to deceive and ensnare the unhappy object of their insidious attentions, Hernandez now scarcely thought of Vivonio, whom he had committed to the sole care of Rimaldi ; but so indifferently was this trust fulfilled, that while for hours the latter
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was rioting in the caverns, the poor babe was left to indulge his infantile sorrows alone, in the dreary chamber in which he was concealed.

“ Deluded into an opinion that her own life, and that of her child, had been saved by Hernandez, Victoria regarded him with sentiments of gratitude and esteem ; but when at length the veil which hitherto had hid his iniquitous intentions was withdrawn, and, instead of the generous and humane character she had supposed, she beheld in him a man, who appeared to have the most infamous designs on her honour, she sunk beneath the shock, and a severe indisposition ensued, from which she recovered only to meet death under another form ; for having soon after found means to make her escape, she and her child perished in the flight :—part of the infant’s clothes being afterwards discovered suspended on the branch of a tree, which impends over the brow of a tremendous precipice, at whose foot a deep and rapid
current

current dashes over the broken rocks into the sea ; it was therefore concluded, that, wandering in the dark, she and her babe fell down the steep, and were drowned in the torrent !

“ Soon missing his intended prey, Hernandez appeared more incensed at her having escaped from him, than, when certain of her death, he seemed touched by remorse for having driven her to the extremes, by which she and her child met with the fatal accident. But whatever rage and vexation he felt at the disappointment of his libertine hopes, were soon dissipated amidst the riotous excesses in the caverns : when apart from these, as he had no other object to employ his serious thoughts, they were, of course, turned on the young Vivonio. Had it been compatible with his own interest, he would not have hesitated at taking the most inhuman method to release himself from this care ; but the preservation of the child being connected with his further views, he could

easily determine on sparing his life. Yet where he should be brought up, was a point that remained for awhile undecided. After several consultations with the Countess, it was, however, at length settled that he should be placed in a convent of Dominican Friars, situated in a wild and lonely part of the Alps. In this religious house, Rimaldi had once passed a night, and he represented the Abbot as a man of easy and credulous disposition, one who was by no means likely to scrutinize any tale they might devise respecting the child, nor to decline giving him admission, provided he was certified of being well paid for his support. The invention of a story to carry this plan into effect, was left to the fertile imagination of the Countess, who, as Rimaldi objected to appearing at the convent, undertook to convey the child to his destined abode; yet as the attendance of Rimaldi could not be dispensed with, he agreed to accompany her on the journey.

“ Having

“ Having disguised the child and themselves in the mean habits of peasants, they set off; and, after a tedious and wearisome journey through France, arrived in Dauphiny. In ascending the Alps, Rimaldi proved himself perfectly acquainted with the rocky paths which led to the convent, of course, any other guide was unnecessary. A deserted hut, at a short distance from the convent, afforded them a temporary shelter. Here the Countess exchanged her humble garb for the rich dress of a cavalier, with which she had provided herself for the present purpose. Her tall, elegant figure, the dignity of her air, and her unabashed confidence, rendered her in this disguise beyond the reach of detection. Leaving the child to the care of Rimaldi, she proceeded late one evening to the convent, where she introduced herself, as a traveller who had missed his way in those wild regions.

“ The utmost hospitality marked her reception here, and a few hours conversa-

tion with the Abbot convinced her that the account given of him by Rimaldi was strictly just. Humanity and credulity appeared to be the leading features of his character, which, with the slight knowledge he had of the world, having been educated wholly for the church, rendered him a proper subject for imposition.

“ Having soon found out the disposition of the Superior, and thence assured of succeeding in her design, the Countess, with her usual deceptive skill, began her operations. Before she retired for the night, she requested the Abbot to favour her with a private interview, in consequence of which he attended her to the chamber appointed for her use. Here she confessed that design, not chance, had directed her to the convent ; then, after a short preparatory discourse, she, in seeming confidence, informed him that an Italian nobleman had lately discovered that his lady had been false to her marriage vows ; that the faithless wife had died in
consequence

consequence of wounds, which were generally supposed to have been struck by some unknown assassin ; but which this female impostor artfully insinuated were given by the hand of the enraged husband, who, she further stated, had, prior to his having fully detected the infidelity of his wife, solemnly enjoined her to remove from his sight a boy, who, though born in wedlock, he had but too just reason to believe was not his own, and whom, should the perfidy of his lady be proved, he might be impelled to sacrifice to his vengeance. That hearing of the Marchesa's death, and the manner of it, and anxious to save the unfortunate innocent from the fury of his reputed father, she had determined to fulfil, with all possible dispatch, the solemn request of her injured friend ; and had accordingly entered the villa by night, and secretly brought off the child, with whom she afterwards fled from Naples, it being impossible to keep him concealed there, as the illustrious father, and even the con-

fessor of the late Marchesa, were taking the most active measures to discover the supposed assassins, and to obtain information of the child.

“ The venerable Abbot, though at first doubtful of the veracity of this tale, yet, after listening to many particulars calculated to deceive, afforded credence to the scandalous fabrication, and consented to receive the child, who, a night or two afterwards, was conveyed, by Rimaldi, to the gate of the convent, and left there.

“ Having obtained a second private interview with the Abbot, for the purpose of imposing the more effectually on his credulity, and in which she succeeded to her wish, the pretended cavalier departed from the convent; and having joined Rimaldi, they hastily quitted the Alps, and returned, with all possible speed, to Spain. When arrived at the Castle de Riverra, knowing how to gain admittance privately to the south tower, they from thence immediately repaired to the caverns, where
they

they found Hernandez surrounded with luxury. Having detailed to him every particular relative to her interviews with the Abbot, the Countess proceeded—

‘ From the nature of the tale I invented to impose on the credulous recluse, you may perceive how impossible it would be for Alvanio, should he ever breathe a sentence of what passed, respecting either the Marchesa or the child, to clear himself from the guilt, which you, by referring the Marchese to the Superior, have it fully in your power to attach to him. No one hearing the relation of the Abbot, but would instantly conclude the Count to have been the contriver of both schemes; and, of course, the odium of the whole would rest entirely on him. The theft of the immediate heir to the Dukedom and estates of Orenza, will be looked on as a barbarous measure, pursued by Alvanio, to finally remove that impediment to his brilliant prospects, while the attempt we made to carry off the lady will be con-

sidered as an artifice employed purposely to produce those effects, which, in her condition, might reasonably be expected, when suddenly thrown into alarm and terror, and thereby prevent a second obstacle to the accomplishment of his ambitious views; but circumstances would, as Alvanio is situated, militate strongly against him, and it would thence appear that he had hesitated at no villainy to secure to himself these rich possessions. To give the appearance of a deep self-interested motive for the total seclusion of the son of Di Romanzini, it will be necessary that the stipend agreed upon for his support in the convent, be annually remitted, with the addition of rich presents, which, should the affair ever come to light, will be considered as having been sent as bribes to secure the fidelity of the Abbot, and, of course, be esteemed most convincing proofs of the Count's guilt. But should all be discovered, and should he even endeavour to implicate you in the commis-

sion

sion of these deeds, yet having no witnesses to corroborate his testimony, it would be treated as a futile attempt at self-defence, and which would by no means invalidate the charges which existing and past circumstances would prove against him. Rimaldi and I have utterly forsaken society. Your connexion with the Moors he knows not of; therefore, as he would be unable to point out who were the agents in the transactions, the whole of his accusations would tend rather to criminate than exculpate himself. But it is highly improbable,' she added, 'that Alvanio will ever become so much his own, for us to reveal secrets which would involve him in a predicament, of which he doubtless has sense enough to be aware; therefore it is folly to waste time in conjectures, especially when we are provided against the worst.'

"Hernandez, though he greatly approved of the steps the Countess had taken to fix the child in the convent, be-

cause they involved his own security, yet he felt an invincible repugnance to parting with money, and therefore strongly objected to making the Abbot a partaker of his wealth. The sum that had been required for the support of the child was small, nevertheless Hernandez deemed it more than adequate, consequently rich presents appeared a tax he was most unwilling to accede to. The arguments which were used by the Countess on this occasion, however, overbalanced his pecuniary scruples, and so far silenced the remonstrances of his narrow mind, as to make him acquiesce in the propriety, though he murmured at the necessity of the measure; and ceasing to remember how much he had himself acquired by the advantages he had taken of the Count's weakness, he inveighed against himself for having any concern in so troublesome an affair, and even expressed a wish that he had actually disposed of the child in the way he had mentioned to Alvanio.

“ About

“ About a week after the return of the Rimaldis, Hernandez received a letter from the Count. This epistle was filled with expressions of grief and remorse. After attempting to describe the anguish he felt, the unhappy writer proceeded—

‘ The death of the child has not ensured to me the prospect of those possessions which your friendship vainly hoped would follow that execrable deed. Letters from Italy inform me that the Marchesa has left a daughter, whom the Duke di Orenza has taken proper measures to make heiress to his immense possessions. Thus you perceive I have no further hopes of aggrandizement. Oh Marino! what a vortex of misery have I plunged into! What has been the reward of my base pursuits?—The black guilt of murder, the eternal loss of repose, and the total extinction

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tion of those hopes which partly urged me on to ruin !'

“ Alvanio then enlarged upon the horrors he endured, the torments he suffered from an accusing conscience, and the appalling apprehensions which perpetually harrowed up his soul ; then execrated the abominable officiousness of the Rimaldis, through which the innocent child had been so inhumanly destroyed ; and concluded with conjuring Hernandez to devise some expedient to avert the suspicions which possibly might hereafter light on him.

“ It is probable that Hernandez, whose mind was unsusceptible of compunction, would have derided the feelings of the Count, had not the apprehensions he expressed, and the consequences he himself dreaded from such apparent deep re-

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morse, impressed him with the most serious alarm.

“ Imparting his fears to the Countess, she quickly contrived a method to relieve him from the burden. Having learned from her servant that, some time before he entered her service, he attended on a young Venetian, named Spignola, and that this man once had a serious quarrel with the Marchese di Romanzini, and had afterwards attempted to assassinate him, it now occurred to her that if it were possible to lead the Marchese into a belief that this Spignola had been the author of his misfortunes, it would effectually ward off suspicion from the Count, and be an equal security for Hernandez.

“ The servant being spoken to on this subject, and tempted with the promises of considerable reward, was prevailed upon to repair to Naples; with a billet which he was ordered to deliver to the Marchese di Romanzini.

“ The man faithfully executed this commission ;

mission ; but the Marchese had no sooner read the note—the contents of which informed him that his son was dead, that the revenge of the writer, who had signed himself Spignola, was now complete, and that his hatred for the Marchese would never cease—than he ordered his attendants to pursue the messenger, who being overtaken was brought to the Castle di Orenza ; and after being interrogated, without affording any satisfactory information, was confined there : but, about a week afterwards, made his escape, and returned to the caverns.

“ This man, who had embraced the Mahometan faith, and was no less avaricious than Rimaldi, soon after accompanied Zanga on a cruize, and was killed in an engagement, which the brigantine had with a Maltese vessel.

“ As it was now believed that the suspicions of the Duke and the Marchese would rest wholly on this Spignola, the fears of Hernandez vanished, and he devoted

voted himself to the cultivation of the strictest friendship with the Moors; his fidelity to whom was at length so well established in their opinions, that the most unreserved confidence prevailed on his part and theirs. As a proof of the trust reposed in him, he was informed of a secret correspondence which these infidels held with a troop of smugglers, that infested the Pyrenees; that the outward cave was the place where they held their meetings, and exchanged their different merchandise.

“ This information gave at first no small alarm to Hernandez, but which ceased when he was assured, by Zanga, that the smugglers were totally unacquainted with the interior caverns, nor even suspected that the cave of rendezvous was not the full extent of it.

“ Contemplating the advantages which must result to the Moors from this intercourse with the smugglers, and which rendered the caverns both necessary and convenient

venient for the illicit traffic of the former, Hernandez became not only reconciled to the visits of the latter, but delighted with the hope of making this commerce equally subservient to his avarice and his pleasures.

“ Having entered into a compact with the Moors, by which it was agreed that he should have a competent share of the spoils, many ancient castles, which Hernandez had pointed out, as in a defenceless state, and richly furnished, were respectively plundered, while numerous young females, of high rank, were at different periods dragged from their homes, and sold to slavery, except those whose beauty attracted Hernandez, and, being claimed by him as his share of property, became the lost victims of his licentious cruelty in the spacious caverns of San Stephano.

“ In short, most reverend Fathers, these infidels, these inveterate foes to Christianity and Spain, reaped considerable advantages
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by the directions given them by the no less reprobate Hernandez, who soon became extraordinarily enriched by the nefarious practices in which he was concerned, while those devoted slaves to vice, the Rimaldis, acquired, by their address and management, no inconsiderable share of the plunder. Perceiving that the Countess had an unbounded influence over the mind of Zanga, Hernandez always treated her with such marked indifference when he was present, that the Moor imagined he had no cause for jealousy, and therefore suffered her to remain in the caverns while he was absent. Once or twice she accompanied him on a cruize; but far more attached to Hernandez than to her Moorish lover, she pretended that the sea injured her health, and easily prevailed on Zanga to permit her to continue in the subterraneous caves.

“ Under the direction of this woman, the caverns gradually assumed their present form; and preferring a residence here

here to all the allurements of the world, she soon became surrounded with the brilliance of Eastern splendour.

“ Young Moorish girls were brought hither from Algiers, over whom the Countess had unlimited command; and, while she reigned as sultana in this singular seraglio, the unfortunate females that composed it, trembled at the frown of *her* who was permitted to rule over them with so despotic a sway.

“ The opinion universally entertained by these young women was, that they were slaves to a Moorish chief, whom jealousy induced to keep them hid in a subterranean abode, in some obscure part of Algiers. That they were in Spain, never once entered into the minds of these girls, as they supposed that the corsair had merely conveyed them from one part of Barbary to another. These slaves, however, were seldom long retained; when their beauty became familiar, they were generally carried back to Barbary, and sold in places remote from
those

those whence they had been taken. Others succeeded, amongst whom were frequently lovely young Christian females, of distinguished rank. From these a few were generally selected for his own pleasures by Hernandez, who appearing only in the Moorish habit, and knowing well how to assume the Moorish manners, was supposed by the hapless victims to be really what he personated : nor did these young women ever suspect the truth. The splendid appearande of the caverns, the Moorish slaves, taught them to conclude they were in some part of Barbary ; but, as their sorrow and dejection rendered them unpleasant companions, they soon shared the fate of their predecessors.

“ But neither the inordinate love of wealth, nor the gratification of his inclinations to vicious pleasures, could make Hernandez so neglectful of his personal safety, as to be inattentive to the Count. When the agent had returned from Italy, and he
had

had learned that the scheme had been successful, he hastened to Madrid, and there quickly quieted the fears of Alvanio, by informing him with what facility the injured Marchese had suffered himself to be deceived into the belief of Spignola being the author of the black transactions, so ruinous to his own happiness.

“ During the short stay Hernandez made in the metropolis, he so admirably affected a contrite sorrow, that the Count believed him to be a sincere sharer in the remorse which wounded his own bosom; and when they separated, it was with renewed protestations of unceasing friendship.

“ Some months after this, Hernandez again proceeded to Madrid, where he was received by Alvanio with evident satisfaction. Weak, instable, and tormented in mind, an uninterrupted correspondence had not consoled him for the absence of a man, the sophistry of whom could alone calm
his

his internal feelings, and whose continual presence only could afford the support he needed.

“ Knowing that the Count had imbibed a hatred for the Castle de Riverra, because there had commenced those agonies of mind, which, though in a less degree, still tortured his breast, Hernandez availed himself of this prejudice to avoid a guest whose society there would have been by no means pleasing. When, therefore, Alvanio declined his pretended solicitations to accompany him thither, he deterred him from retracting the refusal he had given, by saying he could not have the cruelty to persist in urging his friend to visit a place that could not but recall to his mind those melancholy events, which were a source of so much anguish to him, and equally so to himself.

“ As Hernandez never acted without an interested motive, he had one now for being unusually soothing and attentive to the Count. He had formed a new project,

ject, which, should it succeed, would for ever seal up the lips of Alvanio ; and as this project related to a union between Ferdinand, the son of the Count, and the young heiress of Orenza, he found no difficulty in persuading Alvanio to determine on seeking an alliance which would be attended with such advantages.

“ Hernandez, however, recommended to the Count not to give the least intimation of his having a wish of the sort, until his return to Italy—an event which was not to take place for some years. The infant Rosalia, he observed, might not live, or if she did, there could be no danger in the delay. The Count, who feared that a premature solicitation of her hand might create suspicion, readily concurred in the prudence of this advice ; and while he thanked his wily friend for suggesting the plan, he inwardly rejoiced at his having counselled him to postpone the commencement of it to so remote a period.

“ Thus, in visits to Madrid, and luxuri-
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ous revels in the caverns, alternately, Hernandez passed near nine years, without feeling a pang of remorse for the miseries he had caused, and those he was continually occasioning.

“ Convinced by the lengthened silence of the Abbot, who had been instructed, in case the child should die, to address a letter to Signor Martini, the name the Countess had assumed, Post-Office, Naples, that the son of Di Romanzini still lived, Hernandez continued to observe punctuality in the promised remittances, the regular stipend being generally accompanied by some rich present. This business was always conducted by Pedro, the confident of all his master’s secrets, and who for this purpose went annually to Naples, from whence he transmitted the packets to the Convent of San Jerome.

“ Towards the expiration of the ninth year, however, Hernandez was seized with a suspicion that the young Vivonio was

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no more, and that the Abbot, to secure the annual emoluments, might have concealed the circumstance. This suspicion daily increased:—but how was the truth to be ascertained? Pedro would not venture near the convent, alledging as his excuse, that having been frequently seen at Naples, his appearing at the convent might be productive of unpleasant consequences.

“ At length Rimaldi undertook the business, and his secret motive for making the proposition was this:—He had acquired great riches by means of the infidels, and though his ruling passion was avarice, yet the dread of losing his ill-gotten gains being more powerful than the hope of possessing more, he became anxious to leave the caverns; and as the suspicions now entertained by Hernandez accorded with his own wishes, he pretended that confinement was ruining his health, and taking advantage of Pedro’s refusal, he offered his own services on this occasion,

occasion, adding, that, should he find that the boy was still living, he would remain near the convent as a watch on his actions.

“ Hernandez, who well knew that Rimaldi would never betray his trust, joyfully accepted this proposal, and the latter set off for the Alps, having taken care to bring his treasure along with him, and retaining in remembrance the pleasing assurances which both Hernandez and the Countess had given him, that each would be mindful of his interests during his absence.

“ At length a letter from Rimaldi arrived, the contents of which informed Hernandez, that Vivonio still lived, and that he had seen the youth, who was a favourite with all the Monks, and considered by them as the adopted son of the Abbot. This epistle concluded with strong assurances of fidelity, and a repeated intimation of its being the writer’s intention to continue on the Alps.

“ His suspicions thus dispersed, and re-

lying on the faith of Rimaldi, Hernandez thought no more of the youth, except at the periods when the remittances were to be made, and in these he was still punctual.

“ Accumulating wealth from his piratical connexions, and immersed in what he called pleasure, Hernandez heeded not the lapse of time, and three years more had rolled away ; at the end of which, the Count Alvanio and family quitted Spain, and returned to Italy. Here a regular correspondence was held between the Count and his insidious friend, without whose advice the former would take no step whatever ; and to whom he at length communicated intelligence, that the union of Ferdinand Alvanio and Rosalia di Romanzini had been proposed, was fully agreed on, and would be solemnized when the affianced pair should have arrived at a proper age.

“ This information gave great pleasure to Hernandez. Convinced that the Count

must have, in great measure, subdued his own remorse, before he ventured to appear before those of whose injuries he had repeatedly accused himself as the cause ; and that if the view of the wronged parties had revived that troublesome feeling, it must have been quickly absorbed, by the consideration of his own interest, Hernandez now saw no occasion for further apprehensions. The prospect of this advantageous alliance, he knew would compel Alvanio to profound secrecy ; and as his own security rested on the accomplishment of this view, he determined that Vivonio should never appear to interrupt it : nevertheless he was too much engrossed by his pleasures and gains, to speedily decide the fate of the youth.

“ The Count had been about three years in Italy, when the silence of Rimaldi both surprised and alarmed Hernandez. This man, since he quitted the caverns, had been in the habit of writing thrice during the year, and each time gave some

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account

account of Vivonio ; the not receiving a letter from him, therefore, at the customary period, exceedingly perplexed and embarrassed Hernandez.

“ Several weeks passed on in suspense, and Hernandez was not without his fears and suspicions of Rimaldi. Letters which were afterwards received from the Count, however, calmed these suspicions, as they contained nothing of importance ; and it was but natural to imagine, that, had Rimaldi proved false, the Count would not have been silent on the subject, as he would, ere now, have been involved in the most disagreeable circumstances, had any particular transpired respecting Vivonio.

“ At length Hernandez conjectured that Rimaldi was no more ; if so, it was necessary that some person should hasten to the convent, purposely to induce the Abbot to make Vivonio immediately take the vows. For to devote this much-wronged youth to a monastic life, had now become the fixed intention of Hernandez, who, as
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he could no longer place a watch on his actions, thought it highly requisite that his continuance in the convent should be ensured by his entering the order.

“ Having no person whom he could entrust with this commission, Hernandez, after some deliberation, resolved to go himself to the Alps, and when arrived there, to first ascertain whether Rimaldi was alive or dead; but, at all events, to afterwards proceed to the convent, not with any view of seeing Vivonio—him he thought it highly expedient he should avoid, but to have a private interview with the Abbot, for the purpose of acquainting him with his final intention respecting the youth.

“ In pursuance of this resolve, and attended by Pedro, Hernandez departed; and, on reaching the Alps, was conducted by the guides to within a mile of the convent. The conjectures he had formed concerning the fate of Rimaldi, were here confirmed; for having made enquiries

amongst some peasants he met, he was informed that the strange man, whom nobody knew, and every body feared, and who had inhabited an old cottage upon the rocks, was one night struck dead with lightning.

“ As each particular relative to his place of abode, and the fear with which the simple rustics regarded him, had been communicated by Rimaldi to Hernandez, the latter knew full well that the—‘ strange man,’ whose fate he heard related, was no other than his own emissary ; but the sudden and awful manner of his death made no impression on Marino. The certainty of the event, however, rendered him more eager to hasten the doom he had decreed for Vivonio, and he accordingly proceeded to the convent.

“ Here he was courteously received by the Superior, who, he quickly perceived, imagined him to be the Marchese di Romanzini. This idea Hernandez rather encouraged, and having intimated the occasion of his visit, and received from the

Abbot

Abbot repeated assurances of making the youth conform to his will, he took leave and departed.

“ Immediately quitting the Alps, Hernandez proceeded to Naples. The Count Alvania was then at his villa near Gaita ; thither his insidious friend hastened, and was received by Alvania with unfeigned satisfaction.

“ The presence of Hernandez was, at this period, extremely grateful to the Count, whose hopes of uniting his son to the reputed heiress of Orenza, had recently experienced a severe disappointment. This circumstance Alvania soon imparted to Hernandez, who, though he concealed his emotions, was greatly disconcerted by the information.

“ On the following day, however, his sentiments on this subject underwent a change. He beheld Signora di Romanzini, and conceived for her a passion as extravagant as it was unconquerable.

“ That the inclinations of this young
14 lady

lady accorded not with the wishes of her friends, was a subject on which Hernandez reflected with rapture, until it was hinted to him that she distinguished with partiality a young nobleman, named the Count Guidoni. Instead of discouraging the hopes he had formed, the knowledge of this circumstance served only to render him the more desirous of obtaining the lovely object of his mean, selfish passion ; and he accordingly requested the Marchese di Romanzini's permission to address his daughter.

“ Though the rank, fortune, and personal endowments of Hernandez, justified his pretending to the hand of Signora Rosalia, yet the disparity of their years being considered as a just objection by the Marchese, he politely declined his proposals.

“ The haughty Marino never forgave this refusal, which had severely wounded his pride ; yet concealing his vindictive resentment, and his unsuccessful passion,
alike

alike from all, he continued on friendly terms with the Marchese, at the same time that he was meditating a new stroke, which should deprive this much wronged and afflicted nobleman of his only remaining child.

“ When the Marchese and his daughter had returned to the Castle di Orenza, Hernandez accompanied the Count and Countess Alvanio to Naples, where he remained some time ; after which he bade adieu to the latter, and proceeded, accompanied by the Count and his son, to Rome. Having passed a few weeks there, he took leave of the Alvanios, and set off for Leghorn, where he embarked for Genoa, with the intention of hastening to the Convent of San Jerome, there to ascertain whether Vivonio had yet taken the vows, and, if not, to engage the Abbot to compel him to enter the order. Enchanted with the beauty of Rosalia di Romanzini, he now more than ever dreaded the consequences of leaving her brother longer at liberty to

pursue the bent of his own inclinations, which might be totally averse to a monastic life; and though it was but reasonable to suppose that the youth retained no recollection of either his own name or family, consequently had no chance of being recognised by the latter, yet his appearing in the world seemed a circumstance too replete with danger, not to require every exertion to prevent it. Besides, Hernandez had himself a view on the Orenza estates, and, as he had already determined, if possible, to carry off Rosalia, he flattered himself with the hope, that, should he succeed in the attempt, his passionate declarations, and his tender importunities, might move the heart of one so young, so artless, and gentle, and at length induce her to reward him with her hand.

“ Full of his projects, Hernandez, after journeying with the utmost haste, arrived at San Jerome; and there understanding from the Abbot, that Lorenzo, as the youth was then called, had not yet taken the

VOWS,

vows, he expressed great disapprobation of the Superior's conduct, and commanded that, on the following morning, Lorenzo should be required to declare his determination.

“ The morning came, but with it consternation and disappointment. Lorenzo was no where to be found : he had quitted the convent during the preceding night; and Marino, with astonishment and rage, heard that he had fled in company with the Count Guidoni !

“ Consoled only by the reflection, that, as he had not shewn himself to Vivonio, his person could not be described by him, Hernandez hastily left the convent; and having pursued a circuitous route, arrived at length at Rome, where he knew the Count Alvanio still resided, as the period he had fixed on for his return to Naples had not yet arrived.

“ Having disguised himself in mean apparel, with which he had been furnished by Pedro, he proceeded to an obscure inn,

and there awaited the appearance of the Count, to whom it was now become necessary to reveal every particular relative to Vivonio.

“ The Count, with trembling haste, obeyed the summons of his friend, and in this interview was made acquainted with past circumstances, and prepared for the event which was justly supposed to be on the point of taking place, at the Castle di Orenza.

“ The joy which Alvanio truly experienced on learning that Vivonio still lived, was, on reflection, considerably damped by the fear of being suspected to have any share in the dark stratagems, by which the youth had been so long estranged from his family; and that this would be the case, he felt a most alarming conviction, while listening to the repetition of the tale told by the Countess to the Abbot. The striking allusion he observed in this story to his own circumstances, both prior to, and after the marriage of the
Marchese,

Marchese, almost distracted him. A thousand times he execrated the Rimaldis, and swore that he was now completely ruined.

“ After several hours spent in arguments calculated to calm the perturbed mind of the Count, Hernandez succeeded in his endeavours to reconcile him to what it was impossible to undo ; and when he had brought Alvania to this disposition, he repeatedly assured him, that, if he had but courage to repair to Orenza, as soon as he should have heard of the return of Vivonio (for Hernandez had no doubt but that the Count Guidoni had, by some extraordinary means, discovered who the youth really was)—if he could so far disguise his feelings, he added, as to cheerfully congratulate the Marchese on the restoration of his son, all would be well, especially as his hastening to the castle, on such an occasion, would appear a proof of conscious innocence, and as such, do away all suspicion—if indeed any suspicion had arisen in the bosom of the Marchese, which

which circumstance was not probable, as such prudent precautions had been taken as would effectually secure the Count from being implicated in the transaction.

“ Notwithstanding the Count thought this advice perfectly right, yet he shrunk from the idea of encountering the Marchese. *That*, however, could not be avoided, without drawing on himself the imputation of guilty terror ; but he determined to keep out of the way, at least till the meeting between Di Romanzini and his son had taken place, and the varied emotions which were to be expected in so uncommon an interview should have subsided.

“ Hernandez by no means approved of this intention ; but Alvanio was, in this one instance, determined to follow his own counsel, to the great vexation of the former, who, having again represented to the Count how much depended on his speedily joining the Orenza family, and the ill effects which might arise from a contrary procedure,

procedure, and in which he inwardly feared he should be himself involved, signified an intention of immediately embarking for Spain. But this was far from being the real intention of Hernandez; for Alvanio had departed only a few minutes, when the former set off for Naples, where he had no sooner arrived, than he sought an obscure lodging, in which he concealed himself, the better to arrange his base plan for carrying off the Lady Rosalia, in the execution of which he expected to be assisted by Zanga, to whom he had written to apprise of his design. Two months, however, elapsed without his receiving the impatiently wished for answer.

“ Meanwhile, Hernandez having heard that a splendid *fête* was to be given at the Castle di Orenza, to celebrate the return of the young Marchese di Romanzini, and being anxious to learn what might be said amongst the peasantry on this occasion, he disguised

disguised himself in the garb of a mendicant, and proceeded thither.

“ During part of this festive day, he hovered near the castle, attending to the rapturous shouts, though more inclined to execrate the cause of, than participate in the rejoicings of the assembled throngs.— But what were his feelings when, towards evening, he learned that the Marchese had that day openly declared his intention of rewarding, with the hand of his daughter, the amiable restorer of his long lamented son !

“ Hernandez returned to Naples, almost frantic at what he had heard, and a fever in consequence confined him for near a fortnight.

“ At length Pedro brought him the long hoped for letter from Zanga, in which the latter informed him, that the vessel would be off the shores of Italy in less than a month.

“ This information gave but little satisfaction

faction to Hernandez. The marriage of the Count Guidoni and Signora di Romanzini was to be celebrated at the expiration of a month; if therefore the vessel did not arrive some days prior to that period, all his hopes would be annihilated.

“ Almost distracted with the fear of being disappointed in his abominable views, the violent hatred he had imbibed for the Count Guidoni, and the unconquerable passion he felt for the Lady Rosalia, Hernandez, day after day, waited for further intelligence respecting the corsair, and had begun to give over all hope of his arrival, when the welcome news reached him that the brigantine was laying off the shores of Naples.

“ Attended by Pedro, and two ruffians, who had been hired for this occasion, Hernandez now hastened to Orenza Castle; and by means of instruments which they had brought for the purpose, they opened, at the dusk of evening, a low postern, and proceeded unobserved till they had reached

reached the gardens, where they concealed themselves till the dark and silent hour of night had arrived.

“ Hernandez, who, on the night of the *fête*, had contrived to discover in what part of the castle the apartments of the Lady Rosalia were situated, now left his lurking-place; and having stationed the two ruffians to keep watch in his absence, he proceeded, followed by Pedro, to the foot of the south tower, to which, by again using instruments, he soon gained admittance; and which being, as he had heard, the only uninhabited part of the castle, and had a communication with the eastern gallery, into which the apartments of Signora di Romanzini opened, he had chosen as the best appropriated to the execution of his black design.

“ Although this undertaking was the most hazardous imaginable, yet all sense of danger, all consciousness of the rash temerity of the step, were so totally banished from the mind of this man, that he
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even ventured to pass through the long galleries, with a light but faintly shaded, and so entirely engrossed by the object he had in view, as to be insensible to the consequences which would ensue from detection.

“ A profound silence, however, reigned throughout the castle. Hernandez at length reached the door of Signora Rosalia’s apartments. Whilst softly endeavouring to remove the lock, a violent shriek, which issued from a distant chamber, occasioned him to desist. Pedro instantly fled. Hernandez, astonished and enraged at this interruption, extinguished the light, and hastily followed; but had no sooner reached the middle of the gallery, than he was seized by some person, who commanded him to stop. A violent scuffle ensued, in which he severely wounded his antagonist, and received a slight wound in his own arm. The moment his opponent fell, he flew, and at the entrance of the gallery which ran along the south wing, he

he overtook the trembling Pedro, who, more attached to his worthless Lord than villains usually are to each other, had fearfully paused till he came up. Him, Hernandez, as he rushed past, ordered, in a whisper, to fly with the utmost speed.

“ Having reached the gardens, they proceeded with incredible speed to the postern, and from thence to the spot where, according to the appointment of Hernandez, a man was waiting with several horses, and a disguise, which, had the plot succeeded, was intended to conceal Signora di Romanzini.

‘ We have failed,’ cried Hernandez, in a low voice. ‘ Throw up the signal.’

“ This signal was a small phosphoric ball, chemically prepared. Each man was provided with one to throw up, in case of failure, as a signal to the others.

“ The order was instantly obeyed. Hernandez sprung on his horse, and, followed by Pedro and the man who had the care of the horses, set off with speed.

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“ The two ruffians in the gardens, to apprise whom of the ill success their employer had met with, the signal was thrown up, no sooner beheld it than they endeavoured to provide for their own safety by flight : nevertheless they narrowly escaped falling into the hands of their pursuers, for the alarm was spreading, and it was only by throwing a large piece of stone into the river, which, by suggesting the idea that they had plunged into it, with the view of swimming across, that they escaped being caught.

“ Having rode on till they reached a small valley, about three leagues from Orenza, Hernández checked his horse, and after delaying a few minutes to reward the man who had accompanied him, and to leave in his hands sums to remunerate the services of the ruffians, who were expected to follow, he parted from the former, and, attended by Pedro, proceeded to Naples.

“ The moment he entered his apartment, he dispatched Pedro to the spot
where

where he was to meet his Moorish friends, with an account of the failure of his scheme, and a promise of joining them at night-fall.

“ Hernandez now had leisure to reflect on what had passed the preceding night, and to give free indulgence to the rage and vexation which swelled his breast.— But fear of being discovered to be the author of, or to have had any share in causing the confusion and distress, which he concluded now reigned at the castle, was far from his thoughts. The men that were employed in the business had been engaged by Pedro, and had not the least knowledge of either the name, rank, or residence of the principal under whose direction they had acted ; and his person had been so carefully disguised as to preclude all possibility of his being recognised by any of them at any future period, of course he could entertain no apprehensions on that head. That he had severely, if not mortally, wounded some person, he

he well recollected ; and, as it could never be known whose hand had given the blow, he rejoiced at the circumstance, as a just reward for their interference.

“ But the more he reflected on his late disappointment, the more enraged he grew at having failed at a moment when so near accomplishing his purpose :—he had partly loosened the lock, when the shriek compelled him to desist ; but for that interruption, he thought, a few minutes longer would have procured him admittance to the rooms. The cries of Signora Rosalia he had designed to instantly suppress, and Pedro had engaged to most effectually silence those of her woman, whom he had heard was the only attendant that slept near the lady.

“ When Pedro returned, he informed his Lord, that it was reported that the Duke di Orenza was no more ; and that it was suspected he had been murdered by a secret enemy of the family, who had
also

also dangerously wounded the young Lord Vivonio.

“ Whatever cause the death of the Duke might have been attributed to, was a matter of perfect indifference to Hernandez ; but the effect which in one respect the melancholy event would produce, and the knowledge of it being the young Marchese who had felt the force of his arm, was a source of equal exultation and triumph.

“ Certain that the nuptials would now be deferred, Hernandez waited the arrival of night, when he hastened to keep his appointment with the infidels ; and having already determined on quitting Italy, he embarked on board the brigantine. The wound which he had received in his arm, and which, imagining but slight, he had neglected, was now become extremely enflamed and painful ; and though he had every assistance the Moors could give, yet the agitated state of his mind kept it a considerable time from healing.

“ After

“ After a tedious and dangerous voyage, the weather being very unfavourable, Hernandez once more found himself in the caverns of San Stephano.

“ Gloomy and sullen, he scarcely listened to the soothing remonstrances of the Countess Rimaldi. In vain she endeavoured to inspire him with the hopes of succeeding to the height of his wishes in future. The dread that the Count Alvanio would suspect him to be the author of the late events at Orenza, had seized his mind, and he doubted not but that his utter ruin would be the consequence. This opinion, which rendered him now as fearful and dejected, as but some weeks before he had been daring and resolute, was cautiously concealed from the Moors, and only slightly hinted to the Countess, with whom he had already determined to concert measures for flying from the fate he apprehended.

“ After passing a day, and part of the succeeding night, in the caverns, he quitted

them, and, with his servant Pedro, was conveyed in a small boat, and landed at about a league's distance from Riverra. From this spot they proceeded to the castle, the sudden appearance of Hernandez at which, excited both the surprise and the curiosity of his domestics; but he immediately accounted for this circumstance, by saying that he had returned from Italy several weeks before, and had lately been with a party of friends, on the French side of the Pyrenees.

“ What now was the surprise and joy of Hernandez, on finding a letter from the Count Alvanio, in which the Count, after mentioning the sudden death of the Duke, as having proceeded from a natural cause, and relating the alarming circumstances which had occurred at the castle, ascribed the whole of the latter to banditti, a party of which, he imagined, had entered with a design to plunder it.

‘ The Marchese and his family,’ he continued, ‘ are of a different opinion : they
attribute

attribute this new cause of unhappiness to the author of their former sorrows ;— but guilty as we are in those respects, we are innocent of this act.’

“ To have escaped even the suspicions of Alvania, was a circumstance so much above the hopes of Hernandez, that he could scarcely credit the reality of what he read ; yet when he recollected that the Count was a stranger to his passion for Rosalia, and his designs on her, and that he could not reasonably imagine he could now have any motive for attempting the life of Vivonio, his surprise at being unsuspected by him vanished, and he only wondered how he could suffer his own fears to overpower his reason as they had done. Thus released from all apprehensions of discovery, and elated with the idea that he might yet succeed in his wishes, his thoughts were employed wholly in contriving means to attain their accomplishment. But, though the passion he felt for Signora Rosalia was the torment of,

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his existence, and he would readily have hazarded life to gain possession of her, yet to marry her was by no means his intention; for, as he could trust the execution of his plans only to his Moorish associates, he well knew the danger of ever suffering her to appear in the world, after such a procedure. But should his scheme succeed, he had determined not to place her in the caverns—the deserted south wing of the castle appearing to him a more eligible abode, and in which he felt certain he could conceal her for life.

“ Whilst employed with the Countess, in devising and arranging projects for the destruction of the lovely Signora di Romanzini, Hernandez received intelligence of the Count Alvanio’s arrival in Spain. Eager to obtain any information which might forward his own views, he hastened to Seragosa, where the Count was then engaged in some concerns relative to his lady’s estates near that city.

“ Alvanio received this visit with infinite

finite satisfaction, and Hernandez was no less pleased at the cordial reception he met with. His credulous friend, he found, was still unsuspecting of his being the author of the late events at Orenza; and also that the Di Romanzini family were yet as much bewildered as ever respecting the secret enemy of their house.

“ During the conversation, Hernandez cautiously avoided any particular mention of Rosalia, yet, with infinite art, he contrived to learn every circumstance relating to the family. The nuptials, he now heard, were not to take place till the expiration of a year, from the time of the Duke's decease; and that the Marchese, his son and daughter, the Countess Alvanio, the Count Guidoni, and Ferdinand, were then at Naples; but that the whole party divided their time between that city and an elegant new villa the Marchese had purchased, and which was situated on the shores of the bay.

“ The Count described the situation of this villa as solitary and romantic—a cir-

cumstance which inspired Hernandez with new hopes, as he conceived it would be easy to carry off the lovely object of his base designs from this lonely spot.

“ Eager to communicate the information he had thus obtained, and to concert with his agents the best methods to carry his scheme into effect, he soon took leave of the Count, who was then preparing to go to Madrid, and returned to the Castle de Riverra.”

Here the memorial broke off.

A few lines were afterwards affixed by the writer, which were to the following effect:—

“ I cannot proceed, Holy Fathers, to the sequel of the detail; yet, in justice to the innocent, I snatch a moment to solemnly affirm, that all the domestics of the Castle de Riverra, Pedro alone excepted, are wholly free from having any share in, or even knowledge of, their Lord's crimes.”

Then followed proper directions for finding the way to the caverns of San Stephano.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

AFTER a long and tedious journey, which the hapless Rosalia sustained with mild fortitude and patience, she found herself within the massy walls of the Inquisition. Though struck with the awful gloom which here surrounded her, she endeavoured to forget her own sorrows, while striving to comfort Agnes, whose horror and grief, on being informed, on their entrance to the prison, that she must now separate from her lady, exceeded all bounds.

Alone in her dreary cell, Rosalia devoted the silent hours to prayer, imploring the

divine aid to support her under this new trial of her fortitude, and to enable her to submit, with pious resignation, to whatever ills her destiny might have allotted her to suffer.

Sometimes the pleasing hope of being speedily liberated, and restored to her family and lover, consoled her for all she had yet endured; and while she fondly anticipated the raptures of such a meeting, she scarcely remembered the events which had ultimately occasioned her imprisonment.

The officers had informed her, that they had express orders to arrest every person found in the caverns; and as Rosalia imagined that the villainy of Hernandez would be manifested on her first examination, it was but natural for her to anticipate a speedy release.

Far different were the feelings of her cruel persecutor. In the solitude of his dungeon, he brooded over his fate with sullen impatience. Recovered from the
shock

shock his arrest had at first occasioned him to feel, the native haughtiness of his mind returned; and still impenitent, and lost to every feeling of humanity, he only regretted with bitterness, that he had so long delayed the accomplishment of his infamous designs on the innocent and lovely Rosalia, who, with a horrible malignancy, he inwardly hoped would eventually fall a sacrifice to the horrors of her prison. Possessed with an idea that the attempted flight of Zellida and his intended victim had been premeditated, he imagined that they had betrayed him to the Holy Office, in order to make their escape unmolested; and while he rejoiced at having punished Zellida with death, he indulged the rancorous and direful hope that Rosalia was now for ever lost to the Count Guidoni.

At length the hour of his first examination arrived. With intrepid coolness he followed his conductors to the hall, and appeared before that dread tribunal with a calm and undaunted air.

After vain endeavours to make him confess, he was ordered back to his cell, and at the same time commanded to prepare for confession, on his next examination, on pain of the torture.

Three sad and solitary weeks had passed, when one night the door of Rosalia's cell was opened, and she was ordered to rise from her pallet of rushes, and follow the officer who waited.

She tremblingly obeyed; and having thrown on her veil, accompanied her conductor through many long and gloomy passages to a spacious room, where she perceived four persons clothed in black, seated near a small table, at which sat a secretary, busily engaged with a number of papers.

Her veil being suddenly removed, a momentary pause ensued. Rosalia, raising her timid eyes, beheld her judges regarding her with surprise and complacency. Unconscious that admiration of her extreme beauty, undiminished even by the paleness

paleness of long suffering, had considerably affected them, she felt calmed by the air of their countenances, and awaited in silent hope the commencement of her examination.

The customary oath of secrecy, respecting all she might behold within the walls of her prison, having been administered to her, one of the Inquisitors at length demanded her name and country.

On her having replied to this question, he said—

“ Rosalia di Romanzini, you are called upon to declare, on oath, the nature of your situation in the Castle of Riverra, and the caverns of San Stephano.”

Rosalia, with modest grace, related the manner of her having been carried off from the villa of her father, and conveyed to the castle of Don Hernandez, whose conduct she briefly detailed, till she came to the circumstance of her having visited the caverns; she then faltered and hesitated.

“ You hesitate ; you wish to conceal somewhat of importance,” said an Inquisitor, who appeared to be the chief.

His severe and thrilling voice struck on the heart of Rosalia, and increased her confusion. At length she meekly replied—

“ A dreadful vow, Holy Father, enjoins me to silence.”

“ The Inquisition has power to absolve you from that vow,” returned the Grand Inquisitor ; “ but it is ever indulgent, where it may be so consistently with justice. We shall not at present command you to speak on the subject you wish to avoid revealing. But that you may not imagine it is possible to conceal aught from our vigilance, know that we are already acquainted with the circumstance you hesitate to mention. Proceed to the events which followed.”

Rosalia then detailed every incident which had occurred, subsequent to the time of her taking the vow, until her arrival at the Inquisition, except the death
of

of Zellida, of which she was still ignorant.

When she had concluded her recital, the Inquisitors conversed for some moments in low voices, after which she was asked—

“Do you know who the person called Zellida was?”

“No, Holy Father.”

“You have informed us, that, on the night of your attempted escape, Don Hernandez accused her as the murderer of the Marchese, your mother, and as the enemy of your house; are you not of opinion that he spoke from an impulse of malicious anger, rather than on any just grounds?”

“To this question, Holy Father,” returned Rosalia, “it is almost impossible to reply. I am entirely unacquainted with Zellida, but as the agent of Don Hernandez. It is certain, as I have already informed this sacred tribunal, that my regretted mother’s death was attended with most mysterious circumstances, and that my beloved father had been long deprived of

of his only son, by a concealed enemy. How far Don Hernandez has with justice accused Zellida, I am yet to learn."

"Do you know, or do you conjecture, what motive influenced Zellida in her endeavours to liberate you from the power of Don Hernandez?"

"I believed her to be influenced by remorse for having been the instrument of placing me in such a dreadful situation."

"You were present at her murder," said the Grand Inquisitor, after a pause.

Rosalia started with horror.

"Is she dead?"

"Wherefore do you affect an ignorance of this circumstance?" rejoined the Grand Inquisitor, in a tone of severity.

"Most Holy Father," said the alarmed Rosalia, "before this awful tribunal, I solemnly declare that, until this moment, I had no knowledge of this dreadful occurrence. May I enquire when the fatal deed was perpetrated, and by whom?"

"This pretended innocence is highly pre-

presumptuous," said an Inquisitor, in accents of extreme displeasure. "The question of a prisoner cannot be answered here. Recollect you now said that Zellida was the murderer of your mother, the Marchesa di Romanzini. Are you certain that no sudden impulse of revenge tempted *you* to urge the death of Zellida?"

"Is it possible!" faintly articulated the horror-struck Rosalia. "Am *I* accused of such a dreadful crime?"

"You were present at the murder," repeated the Grand Inquisitor, with solemnity.

"Oh, never—never!" said the injured Rosalia, raising her clasped hands to Heaven. "Or if," continued she, suddenly recollecting, "surely it must have been perpetrated while I was insensible. I conjure you, Holy Fathers, suffer not this tribunal to be deceived by the direful falsehood! I am innocent. I have not beheld Zellida since the hour of our intended flight. On hearing the horrible charges

pronounced against her by Hernandez, I fainted; and if indeed I was present at the awful moment when that unfortunate woman was deprived of life, it must have been while I was in a state which precluded all consciousness of the cruel deed. Surely the wretched Hernandez, even he, unprincipled as he is, must exculpate me. Where, Holy Fathers, is my servant, Agnes? She beheld all that passed on that night. Oh, say, who is my inhuman accuser?"

A haughty and repelling glance from the Grand Inquisitor reminded Rosalia that, as a prisoner, she was not permitted to hazard such a question. She stood pale and silent, while the tribunal were again engaged in private conversation.

After a short debate, an Inquisitor, turning towards her, said—

"On your next examination, Rosalia di Romanzini, you will do well to use more sincerity than you have done at present."

Two officials then advanced, and Rosalia

was

was led, almost fainting, from this tremendous tribunal.

No language can describe the dreadful agonies of mind which now overwhelmed the lovely and innocent sufferer. To be torn for ever from all she held most dear—her family—her lover—her native country—To be arraigned as a murderer—branded with infamy—not even permitted to assert her innocence of the charge, nor to know who was her accuser—perhaps to encounter the fiercest torture, terminated only by death, in its most terrific form!—these distracting reflections subdued the fortitude of the unhappy Rosalia, and nearly overcame her reason.

For hours she paced her gloomy cell, wildly calling on the names of her lover—her father—her brother, beseeching them to save her from the horrors of her fate, till at length, exhausted by anguish, she sunk on the rushes that formed her miserable couch.

In this sad state, she was found by a
Monk,

Monk, who, one day, entered her cell. The light he carried gleamed on the humid walls. The Father sighed, as he glanced his mild eyes around, then fixed them with a look of softest pity on the hapless, yet beautiful Rosalia, who, half reclined on a wretched bed, gazed on him with an expression so wild and touching, as deeply affected his humane heart.

Far different were the placid features and benevolent looks of Father Francisco, so was this Monk called, from the harsh and scrutinising severity which marked the countenances of the Inquisitors. A tear of compassion glistened in his eye as he regarded the lovely sufferer, whom he addressed in the mildest and most soothing accents.

Unaccustomed for some time past to hear the voice of kindness, and but a moment before despairing of ever hearing it more, Rosalia attentively regarded the bending form and benign aspect of the venerable Father. As he spoke, she listened.

tened. The torpor of despondency gradually yielded to reviving sensibility. His pious exhortations affected her; and, while they occasioned her tears to flow, she felt her mind relieved from the weight of misery which had oppressed it, and elevated to the Divine Power, whose gracious support the Father had admonished her to seek.

Whilst relating her artless tale; and which, ere half told, convinced the Monk of her innocence, Rosalia observed that he frequently appeared rather embarrassed, and as often directed his expressive glances to an obscure corner of the cell. Had she known that the good Father inwardly trembled lest she should utter a sentence which might be perverted to her disadvantage, by any of the agents of these awful prisons, who might perhaps be a concealed witness of their discourse, she would not have wondered at his alarm and precaution.

Rosalia

Rosalia beheld the Monk depart with regret. The religious hope he had revived, and the resignation he had inspired, awoke all the grateful feelings of her heart. Her despair had vanished, her sorrows were now softened, and she felt herself restored to a pious confidence in the all-wise and merciful Power, from whose all-searching eye no darkness can conceal the sufferings of injured innocence, nor hide the iniquity of the evil-doer.

CHAP. VII.

THE singularly horrible accusation which had thrown Rosalia into so dreadful a predicament, proceeded from the disappointed passion, and malignant revenge of Don Hernandez.

Prior to his second examination, that of Agnes took place. From this simple and uninformed girl, the Inquisitors received an incoherent account of Zellida, and that she had been stabbed by Don Hernandez. The further depositions of Agnes were, however, so very confused, that the Inquisitors could scarcely understand her. In fact, the poor girl's terror of this dreadful tribunal

tribunal was increased to so great a degree, by the haughty and severe air of her examiners, that, in a short time, it rendered her utterly incapable of speaking distinctly. Threats and wily questions led her only into involuntary and strange contradictions, and it was soon found to be impossible to render her evidence clear. At length the Grand Inquisitor, enraged and wearied with her incoherence, ordered her from the hall.

Hernandez was next conducted into the presence of these severe judges. His air and manner were now even more haughty and composed than on his first examination. Unconscious that the Inquisitors were well informed of his crimes, he determined not to criminate himself. To every subtle question proposed, he therefore answered only by evasive, wary, and short replies ; so that all attempts to induce him to speak to the subject were found to be in vain. He was then put to the torture, which he bore, for some time, with

with astonishing fortitude. At length he shrunk from the increasing agonies which his dreadful tormentors inflicted, and, crying for mercy, promised to make a full confession of his crimes.

Pale, disfigured, and lifeless, he was then released, and carried to his cell, where, for some days, he remained in a condition which precluded all possibility of his fulfilling his promise.

The motives which had induced the wretched Hernandez to draw on himself such sufferings, were these:—

That his connexions with the Moors had been discovered, and was the cause of his arrest, he felt certain. Not one of his infidel associates had been found in the caverns. Himself, Rosalia, and Agnes, were the only beings discovered there. That Pedro, the instrument and witness of his crimes, had effected his escape, he did not hesitate to believe, as the man had fled towards the opening of the caverns, leading to the cliffs, at the foot of which a small
boat

boat lay moored. Zellida was no more. The Moors were not likely to return, as it was probable that Zanga's friend, the Jew, would give him timely notice of what had happened. He had therefore only to invent a tale to account for the splendid decorations the caverns exhibited; and should he succeed in this, he might reasonably indulge the hope that no proof would thereafter be adduced against him. The domestics of the castle, he concluded, had been strictly examined; but their evidence he well knew must be highly in his favour. When, therefore, on his second examination, he was minutely and craftily questioned, he allowed that the Moors had really inhabited those caverns, but affirmed that he had discovered the splendid recesses only a few months prior to his arrest; and that he had never beheld one of the infidels who resorted thither.

On being asked, why he did not make this discovery public, immediately after it took place? he replied, that his wish of securing

curing the Moors, should they return, deterred him, as he had judged it would be imprudent to communicate a circumstance, which, had it become the subject of public conversation, might have reached the Moors, who, it was probable, had their secret agents, by whom they might have been warned of the dangerous consequences which were certain to ensue, should they again appear in the caverns.

The anger of the Inquisitors was so greatly raised by this weak subterfuge, that Hernandez soon had cause to apprehend they were better informed of his crimes than he had been aware of; yet still fearful of criminating himself, he either replied evasively, or continued obstinately silent. In consequence of this conduct, he was put to the *question*, his enraged judges being determined that their prisoner should, by confession thus extorted, evince the justice of their proceedings.

When Hernandez was pronounced to be

sufficiently recovered to undergo another examination, the Grand Inquisitor, accompanied by two others, and attended by the secretary, visited his cell ; and having brought with them the memorial of his crimes, the Inquisitor, after expatiating largely on the extraordinary indulgence which was shewn to the prisoner, presented him with the record, which Hernandez had no sooner glanced his eyes on, than he beheld the hand-writing of Zellida.

Suppressing the dreadful agitation of his mind, he desired to hear it read. When the secretary had concluded, Hernandez, with apparent calmness, declared himself guilty of every charge it contained, but one ;—and that one related to Signora di Romanzini, who, he solemnly affirmed, had voluntarily quitted Italy.

The Inquisitors were amazed at this intimation ; but they did not feel much inclined to doubt the asseverations of a man, who, as he had confessed himself guilty of the crimes, for which he must suffer death, could

could have no interest in denying one, which they considered as the least. Besides, he had a moment before artfully hinted, that, as some atonement for his apostacy, he would leave all his wealth to the Holy Office, for pious and charitable uses.

“ Yes, Holy Fathers,” resumed Hernandez, “ the lovely Rosalia di Romanzini distinguished me with the most ardent regard. I first saw her in Naples. By her *own consent*, I solicited the Marchese her father’s permission to address her. I was positively rejected. Rosalia’s astonishment and despair equalled my own; but too timid to confess to the Marchese that she loved me, she was silently sinking under the sorrows of disappointed love, when my ardent importunities induced her to promise to fly with me from parental despotism. Every attempt to take her off was sanctioned by her own approbation. The impressions of her education alone prevented her from openly quitting her

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father’s

father's house, and seeking happiness with me. That I succeeded at length to my wishes, you know. The treacherous Zellida, who was my agent in this business, influenced by jealousy (for she knew not till lately that I was tenderly attached to, and intended to marry my Rosalia), has, by denouncing, doomed me to death, and destroyed *her* who was even dearer to me than life. Oh, Holy Fathers," he added, "surely, in such a moment as this, I may entreat!—Oh, tell me, lives my Rosalia still within these walls?"

"She does," replied the Grand Inquisitor; "but on this subject you cannot be further satisfied."

Hernandez was now asked what had induced him to seek the life of Zellida.

To this question he did not immediately reply. For several minutes he seemed as if struggling with some violent emotion. At length he exclaimed —

"Yes, it must be. This is not the hour of folly: justice must be fully satisfied.

—I was

—I was urged to commit the inhuman deed, Holy Fathers, by the tears, the entreaties of my Rosalia. The unfortunate Zellida, envious of our happiness, unceasingly employed artifices to separate us. She repeatedly tried to excite jealousy in the bosom of my beloved, and as often besought her to leave me. Aware of her treachery, and abhorring her for her arts, and anxious to put an end to importunities which both vexed and wearied her, my Rosalia seemed to listen to her counsel, and at length agreed to join in her projects, only to give me a pretext for destroying her.”

“ This is rather extraordinary,” said an Inquisitor. “ Was Rosalia di Romanzini privy to your connexion with the infidels ?”

Hernandez instantly replied—

“ Not till she had resided some time in the castle, Holy Father. I then revealed the secret to her, and bound her by a solemn oath to secrecy, which she has doubt-

less well observed. Yet, though I had admitted her thus far into my confidence, I disclosed not to her the full extent of my connexions; it was therefore not difficult to make her believe that the females residing in the caverns were merely the captives of my associates."

"Those females," observed the Grand Inquisitor, "were not found in the caverns; what had become of them?"

"Not one of the numbers brought thither, Holy Father," returned Hernandez, "ever became stationary. The few that occupied those abodes, prior to the death of Zellida, had rendered themselves obnoxious to her, and were therefore sent off with the corsair."

"Did Rosalia di Romanzini prefer residing in these caverns to continuing in the castle?"

"Her removal thither was by her own choice, reverend Father," coolly replied Hernandez. "A moment after I had struck the fatal blow, which bereft the
unfortunate

unfortunate Zellida of life, a thought occurred that she had possibly written to my Rosalia's family, to acquaint them that she was under my protection. This idea I suggested to my beloved, who endeavoured to silence my apprehensions, though she could not conceal her own fears. A moment's reflection, however, led me to conclude that the regard Zellida had ever shewn for her own safety had prevented her betraying the secret of the caverns; and as neither my Rosalia nor I could divest ourselves of the terrors we mutually felt at the thought of separation, I slightly hinted a wish of concealing her in the caverns, and she embraced the proposal with joy. I conducted her thither; she was enchanted with the splendid abode; but the presence of her attendant, Agnes, caused her to conceal the delight she felt. Here I intended she should remain, until I could procure some Fríar, on whom I might depend, to unite us.

“ The cavern had now become a paradise

dise to me, and was equally considered as such by my Rosalia. But at the moment when we thought ourselves the most blest of mortals, a final period to our earthly bliss was hastily approaching.—The officers of the Holy Office entered. My Rosalia sat horror-struck. Fears for myself, I had none; but the sight of her distress overwhelmed me with grief.”

“ You have affirmed,” said the Grand Inquisitor, “ that Rosalia di Romanzini was ignorant of your connexion with the Moors, until she had arrived at the Castle de Riverra; yet you confess that these men were employed, by her own consent, to take her, with the appearance of force, from her family.”

“ I have said, Holy Father,” returned Hernandez, “ that she was ever ready to concur in any measure, by which she might fly to seek happiness with me: but she knew not who, or of what nation, were the instruments I employed to bring her from Italy; her alarm, therefore, must have

have been great, on finding herself on board a Moorish galley—so great, that it deprived her of sense; but the moment she recovered, Zellida, who was one of the agents employed on this occasion, presented her a letter from me, in which I informed her that she was in care of my own people, who were purposely disguised.”

“ You solemnly affirm,” said an Inquisitor, “ that Rosalia di Romanzini instigated you to the murder you committed?”

“ Most solemnly I repeat the charge, Holy Father,” replied Hernandez. “ Yes, the apparently artless Rosalia di Romanzini is a premeditated murderess! though thus to accuse her is torture more severe than any punishment justice can inflict, yet truth demands the sacrifice. Oh, may she yet atone for her errors, as I do, for mine! I confess them all—I abjure them all; and will, for my late impiety, make all the expiation in my power. The immense treasures I possess, your sacred assembly,

reverend Fathers, shall dispose of as your wisdom shall direct."

If the Inquisitors were a little inclined to be more minute in their enquiries respecting these horrible charges, this last hint silenced every doubt ; Hernandez was therefore only asked what he had done with the body of Zellida, and where his confidential servant, Pedro, was to be found ? To these questions he replied, that he had no doubt but that Pedro had disposed of the body somewhere about the castle ; but as to the man, he knew not what had become of him.

The examination now concluded ; and the Inquisitors departed, perfectly satisfied with the confession of a prisoner, who had manifested to them such marks of genuine penitence ; and no less determined to demonstrate their acute discernment, and clement justice, in the punishment of the innocent Rosalia.

The departure of the Inquisitors had left Hernandez to all the fiend-like exultation

tion of gratified malignancy. The moment he had cast his eyes on the memorial, the suspicion that Zellida was his accuser became a certainty ; and, as it appeared to him equally certain that she had been stimulated by Rosalia to denounce him, the most diabolical resolution of revenge took possession of his mind.

While the secretary was reading the memorial, the thoughts of Hernandez were employed chiefly in arranging his present destructive scheme ; in the execution of which, he fixed the stigma of guilt the most dreadful, on innocence itself.

Far from repenting of the horrid step he had taken, he continued, to rejoice in its success. The idea that Rosalia abhorred him, and that she had caused him to be denounced, strengthened more and more, and increased his thirst of revenge ; while the agonies which he still suffered from the effects of the torture, only made him wish her a fate more dreadful than the one which he hoped awaited her.

“ She rejected my love—she scorned to partake with me the pleasures of life—she shall now feel my hate, and share with me in the pangs of death !” he repeatedly exclaimed ; then, with infernal rapture, he alternately contemplated the sufferings to which he had doomed her, the distraction in which he trusted her family would be involved ; and the heart-rending grief, and incurable despair, which his fancy represented to him as the lot of the Count Guidoni. Yet amidst all the joy these promised gratifications afforded, Hernandez felt one keen regret, and that was for having so immediately deprived Zelida of life. Had he not yielded to his own rage, he thought, she might have been a partaker of those terrible inflictions practised within the dreadful prisons of the Inquisition ; and then his revenge had been complete.

While the reprobate Hernandez was thus passing the lagging hours of dreary imprisonment, the Inquisitors were engaged in

in preparing for the examination of the lovely and cruelly-calumniated Rosalia. Meanwhile, all the domestics of Marino, notwithstanding their innocence and ignorance of their Lord's crimes was declared in the memorial, were arrested. After a few examinations, however, the Inquisitors were compelled to believe that they knew nothing of the matter; the sufferings and imprisonment of the people were, therefore, light in comparison with those of Rosalia, although the Monk had found means to procure her of late some few indulgences:—but they were indeed few, including merely a change of apparel, and a small portion of light refreshment, in addition to the daily food provided for the prisoners; and, to obtain even these, the good Monk, who was the Abbot of a Benedictine society, had been indebted to the interest of his brother, who was one of the superior Inquisitors.

CHAP. VIII.

TWO months had nearly elapsed ere Rosalia was again summoned to appear before the tribunal. The sudden entrance of the official agitated her; but her composure soon returned, and having thrown on her veil, she followed her conductor, with feeble steps, to the tremendous hall.

Having led her to her appointed station, the officials drew back a few steps; and she was now at liberty to contemplate the solemn scene.

The hall, which was uncommonly spacious, was hung with black. A range of arched pillars crossed the farther end of the
the

the room, and formed a recess, the interior of which was also hung with black, and lighted by a few lamps, disposed in such a manner as to display the gloomy outlines of the rack, and various other diabolical engines of torture. Exactly opposite this terrific recess, elevated on several steps of black marble, was placed the chair of the Grand Inquisitor; and on each side, rather lower, were ranged the seats of the inferior members. On looking towards this part of the hall, the eye was struck with the sight of a crucifix, and several other symbols of that *divine religion*, whose every precept inculcates *love, mercy, and universal charity*, adorning a place devoted to the practices of inhuman persecution and execrable cruelty.

Rosalia shuddered with horror, as this reflection crossed her mind. Her eye glanced on the Grand Inquisitor. He was a man of commanding air, and majestic form. His countenance, strongly marked, displayed

displayed no trait of pity, and his severe penetrating eye seemed to possess the power of reading the inmost feelings of the soul. The other Inquisitors, who surrounded him, appeared attentive only to every glance of their superior, while with subtle watchfulness they regarded the emotions of all around them. A blaze of light which illumined the tribunal, served only to render the horrors of the obscure parts of the hall more terrific.

The profound silence which reigned throughout the hall when Rosalia entered, still continued. The Grand Inquisitor, who was attentively examining some papers, which he successively received from the secretary, occasionally delivered some orders, in low whispers, to the officials. Shortly after, Rosalia perceived several persons, clothed in black robes, their faces concealed, conducted into the hall. They took their stations at some distance from the tribunal, and were guarded by several officials.

After

After an interval of a few moments, the wretched Hernandez, supported by two officials, slowly entered. His dislocated limbs were concealed by a long black robe, but his ashy countenance, the wild glare of his eyes, and his shrunk features, spoke, in terrible expression, the agonies which he had undergone. On a signal from the Grand Inquisitor, he was placed in a seat which had been prepared for his reception. Immediately afterwards a number of other persons were led into the hall, amongst whom Rosalia observed her young attendant, Agnes.

Another solemn pause ensued. At length the Grand Inquisitor said—

“ The prisoner, Hernandez de Marino, having made a full confession of *his* numerous crimes, this assembly is now convened to pronounce just judgment on the guilty and impenitent.—Rosalia di Romanzini, appear.”

An agitated murmur, for some minutes, pervaded the hall, as the beautiful Rosalia, suddenly

suddenly unveiled by an official, gracefully approached the tribunal. The anguish of suspense and grief had considerably impaired her health. Pale and languid, her expressive countenance wore an air of deep melancholy, while her form, still possessing its native loveliness, appeared like the fragile lily of the valley, bending beneath the wild gusts of the tempest. Long suffering seemed to have robbed her of the animated charms of beauty, only to adorn her with all the interesting graces, which can awaken the keenest emotions of pitying sorrow and admiration. There was an air of meek resignation, a divine expression, in her dark blue eyes, which, while it would have convinced the unprejudiced mind of her piety and innocence, would have rent the humane heart with agony, at beholding one so young, so exquisitely lovely, doomed to perish, like the fairest flower of the spring, beneath the heavy foot of unjust oppression.

A deep silence succeeded, as she knelt
before

before the judges, and meekly replied to her name.

“ Arise,” said the Grand Inquisitor.

Rosalia obeyed, and stood, with modest dignity, before the tribunal. Her light luxuriant tresses waved on her graceful shoulders, while her fair and polished arms, crossing her bosom, were strikingly contrasted with her dark robe.

After a momentary pause, the Grand Inquisitor said—

“ Rosalia di Romanzini, you are acquainted with the nature of the charges exhibited against you : you are accused of being a principal in the murder of the person called Zellida. Your accuser desires not concealment : behold him in the prisoner, Hernandez de Marino.”

“ Merciful Providence !” faintly ejaculated Rosalia, as she turned her eyes on Hernandez.

Pale malignancy and supercilious triumph marked his features. She shrunk back in horror.

“ Rosalia

“ Rosalia di Romanzini,” said the Grand Inquisitor, in a severe tone, “ you are not before this tribunal to indulge in useless exclamations, but to answer to the charges brought against you. Highly indulgent to your sex and age, we permit your being confronted with your accuser, and expect, in return, undisguised truth. As a further proof of our lenity, I inform you that the prisoner, Hernandez de Marino, has subscribed the veracity of a memorial, charging him with various crimes, which was lately laid before the Holy Office. To each fact contained in the black catalogue, he has pleaded guilty, with the exception of some incidents relating to yourself. This memorial slightly mentions an intention, on the part of the prisoner, Hernandez de Marino, of carrying you off from your family ; but this charge is so evasively stated, and so suddenly broken off, that it leads us to imagine that some motive of jealousy induced the writer to give to your quitting Italy that colour. The
prisoner

prisoner solemnly affirms that you *voluntarily* placed yourself under his protection. It is not reasonable to suppose that he would be so atrociously vile as to accuse an innocent person of being partner in his crimes, when no benefit could result to himself from such a step. Reply, therefore, with sincerity, to the questions I shall propose; nor imagine that, by any artifice, you can elude the penetration of your examiners.—Where did you first behold the prisoner, Hernandez de Marino?”

“In Italy,” replied Rosalia, “at the villa of the Count Alvanio.”

“He then professed a passion for you,” said the Grand Inquisitor, “which you returned?”

“Never—never, Holy Father,” returned she, with energetic firmness. “I——”

“Recollect yourself,” interrupted the Inquisitor. “He applied to the Marchese di Romanzini, for his approbation and sanction of your mutual passion. This
certainly,

certainly did not happen without your knowledge and consent."

"Has the prisoner asserted this falsehood, Holy Father?" exclaimed Rosalia, glancing her eyes on Hernandez, while astonishment and conscious innocence animated her lovely countenance with all the mild severity of a reproving angel.

"Attend," cried the Grand Inquisitor. "How frequently will you need being reminded that you are to answer, not to propose questions."

"Pardon me, Holy Father," returned she, "I will endeavour to restrain these emotions."

"You certainly could not be ignorant of the prisoner's application to the Marchese," resumed the Grand Inquisitor.— "Remember you are before your judges, and speak without prevarication."

"I am not only ignorant of that circumstance, but, pardon me, Holy Father," replied she, "I much doubt that such an application

application was ever made; surely if it had, my beloved father would have mentioned it."

In pronouncing the name of her parent, Rosalia's voice faltered. She lost the air of fortitude which, till that moment, she had worn: tears wetted her downcast eyes. She felt unable to proceed. After struggling with her emotion a few moments, she again raised her eyes to the tribunal, and continued—

"I stand here under the bitter infliction of an accusation, as false as it is horrible and cruel. I entreat you, Holy Fathers, to summon my family, ere you proceed further on this trial. They——"

"To what purpose?" hastily interrupted an Inquisitor. "How can they, who are ignorant of your arts, prove you to be innocent of the charges alledged against you? The prisoner, Hernandez de Marino, has certified to us that your family imagine you were torn by force from their arms."

"And most truly do they believe so,
Holy

Holy Father," replied she. "Is it possible that this sacred assembly can credit the horrid tale, the invention of insatiate malice and inhuman guilt! At the period when I was forcibly torn from my friends and country, I was on the eve of being united to a nobleman, whose inestimable virtues had rendered him as dear to my parent, and all my other relatives, as to my own heart. The Count Guidoni, the restorer of my brother——"

"We know," again interrupted the Inquisitor, "that being an adept in all the dissimulation natural to your sex, you suffered yourself to be contracted to the Count, when, in fact, your heart was devoted to the man, whom you now affect to regard as an object of abhorrence. But reflect, this disingenuous conduct will hasten, rather than protract the punishment of your crimes. The Inquisition never proceeds but on just grounds; you will therefore do well not to provoke its wrath, by equivocations or evasions. Listen in

silence to the extent of the charges against you, and afterwards point out any proof which you can bring forward to establish your innocence."

"Hear me but a few words, reverend Fathers," exclaimed Rosalia, "and I will then implicitly obey.—As my false accuser has confessed himself guilty of innumerable crimes, *that* of his associating with a band of infidels cannot be unknown to you. By some of these agents I was carried off: judge if it were probable that I could ever have consented to place myself in the *power* of such beings."

"You are not accused of being acquainted with the prisoner's connexions prior to your arrival at Riverra," returned the Inquisitor. "As to the Moors having been employed in the execution of the scheme, which was to give to your projected elopement the air of your being made a captive by them, the prisoner allows that you were not prepared for that circumstance; and we doubt not but that

your terror, on finding yourself conveyed on board a Moorish galley, must have been great.—But, recollect—who did you find waiting to receive you in the cabin?”

“ Who might have been in the cabin when I was carried into it, I know not, Holy Fathers,” replied Rosalia, “ being at that time in a state of insensibility.—When I recovered, the first person I beheld was Zellida.”

“ And she delivered you a letter from Don Hernandez, the contents of which revealed to you the trick, and reconciled you to your being in the power of the Moors,” said the Grand Inquisitor, ironically.

“ I received no letter from Don Hernandez, Holy Fathers,” returned Rosalia.

“ I fear there can be but little doubt of your guilt,” said another of the Inquisitors, who had been present on her first examination. “ You surely will not deny your *hatred* for the murdered Zellida?”

“ Most solemnly I *do* deny this charge,”

returned Rosalia. "I bore no sentiment of *hatred* towards that woman, reverend Father; yet I will acknowledge I did not like her, and often involuntarily trembled in her presence: though I will do her the justice to say, that, during the voyage, she paid the most minute attention to my convenience and ease. On my arrival at Riverra, I was conducted by her to the uninhabited south wing of the castle, and there confined, unconscious of the part of the world I was then in, and equally so of my intended fate. It was not till I beheld Don Hernandez, on the following day, that I found I was not in Barbary. My horror and astonishment, on finding in *him* the author of my misfortunes, were excessive; yet I felt some small alleviation of my troubles, in the reflection that I might find it easier to effect an escape from Spain than from the Moors, had I been their captive. Immediately after my first interview with Don Hernandez, the attendance of Zellida about my person ceased,

to my extreme satisfaction ; and I beheld her no more, until the night whereon the arrest took place. In my first examination, Holy Fathers, I gave a minute detail of all that occurred to me during my abode in the castle ; and I hoped that my just abhorrence of Don Hernandez, and my earnest wish to fly from his power, could not have been doubted.”

“ Rosalia di Romanzini,” said the Grand Inquisitor, sternly, “ these falsehoods are unavailing. Your confinement in the south wing, the prisoner has solemnly affirmed, originated from your own false delicacy—your innate love of artifice. You wished, when you should have returned to Italy, the wife of Don Hernandez, to have it in your power to plead this circumstance, as a proof that it was impossible for you to act otherwise than you had done, in bestowing on him your hand, and as an excuse for your conduct towards the Count Guidoni. Don Hernandez, enchanted with your beauty, indulged these whims: happy

to

to obtain the hand of her he loved so ardently, he scrupled not to accept the promise of your hand on your own conditions. As to your wish of escape, reflect if it be possible to deceive us by such an assertion, when we know that Zellida incurred your hatred by unceasingly entreating you to quit the castle. You dreaded lest the unfortunate woman should reveal your arts to your family; and to these apprehensions, your wonted dissimulation, and vengeful disposition, she fell a sacrifice. To ease your fears, to free you from her importunities, Don Hernandez promised to destroy this woman. You then, with well-pretended gratitude, accepted the offers of Zellida, and made with her a fictitious attempt, on your part, to escape, only to give your lover an opportunity of sacrificing her to your unjust hatred!"

The Inquisitor ceased. Rosalia stood immoveable, lost in astonishment at the vile perversion of facts. The agitation of her mind diffused over her beautiful coun-

tenance an animated glow, while her brilliant eyes, fixed on the Grand Inquisitor, expressed all the noble firmness of conscious innocence.

After a short silence, she said, addressing the Grand Inquisitor, with mild solemnity—

“ I have been ordered, Holy Father, to bring forward *proofs* of my innocence : I have *none*. Those circumstances which should have proved me guiltless, are converted into charges against me. The tale which has deluded this sacred tribunal, is an awful instance of the facility with which a mind, destitute of religion, can warp the truth to its own direful purposes. To the decree of this assembly I must submit.—But, oh !” she continued, while the keenest emotion caused her voice to falter—“ Oh, save my beloved friends from the knowledge of this most strange event ! They believe me to be a captive in Barbary : Let them never know the extent of my misery. Oh, my father ! Guidoni ! my brother !—

brother!—Oh, ye blessed, ye beloved of my heart,” she added, with increasing emotion, “may the horror of your Rosalia’s fate be ever unknown to you! May you be spared the agonies with which such a tale would rend your bosoms; and may I die unlamented, rather than all those most dear to me should weep over the fate of *her*, on whose memory inhuman cruelty has fixed the darkest infamy! I am innocent, Holy Fathers, though powerless to *prove* this truth. Your conviction of my guilt arises only from *appearances*. You judge as *man*—at the tribunal of a Divine Judge, who reads the inmost feelings of the soul, I stand *acquitted*!”

“Your obduracy is incredible,” said the Grand Inquisitor, in a tone of displeasure: “indulgence but induces you to persevere in it. The severity of just torture should be inflicted on a spirit like thine!”

At that moment loud murmurs resounded through the hall. Three strangers rushed forward;—the long black cloaks

they were now thrown off, and Rosalia beheld—her father, her brother, and her lover!

Uttering a shriek of mingled amazement and rapture, she extended her arms, and fell insensible into the embraces of these dear objects.

All was now a scene of confusion. The Marchese sustained his fainting Rosalia, the Duke and the Count Guidoni called wildly on her name, while the violence of the emotion felt by each, seemed to absorb all recollection of where they were. Several of the Inquisitors rose from their seats, and vainly commanded silence. Hernandez, half raised from his chair, gazed with envenomed rage and malice on the group; his eyes struck lightning; and could he have accomplished his wish, he would have instantly plunged a poniard into the hearts of the noble and virtuous lovers.

For some time Rosalia continued insensible: at length she opened her languid

guid eyes, and gazing alternately on the several objects of her tenderest affections, could scarcely credit the reality of what she beheld.

“My father! my brother! my Guidoni!” she exclaimed, “am I indeed so blessed!”

“Be composed, my love,” said the weeping Marchese, in a voice rendered almost inarticulate by grief, while Guidoni, whose feelings were now wound up to desperation, darted a look of intermingled rage, horror, and detestation at Hernandez, who returned it with a ghastly smile of malignant triumph.

“Diabolic wretch!” exclaimed the Count, “your dreadful situation alone secures you from my just vengeance; yet——”

“Hold,” interrupted the Grand Inquisitor. “Do you suppose, Signor, that this sacred assembly knows not how to dispense justice, that you would wrest our authority from us? Retire; and, in si-

lence, hear the decrees of the tribunal. Indulgent to your feelings, we will pass over the confusion your impetuous spirit has occasioned.—Retire.”

“ Oh, most reverend Fathers,” cried the Marchese, while tears of bitter anguish rolled down his faded cheek, “ banish us not from this injured innocent: Refuse not a father’s petition:—Oh, suffer my feeble arm to support my dearest child! Ah! surely a parent’s—a brother’s—a lover’s claims may plead for this indulgence!”

“ Your emotions distress the accused,” said an Inquisitor, unfeelingly.

The trembling Rosalia, raising her head from the shoulder of her agonized parent, now cast a look of earnest supplication towards the tribunal. Vivonio, bending over her in speechless anguish, held one of her cold hands, while the other, extended over the shoulder of the Marchese, was wetted with the tears of the distracted Guidoni.

“ Unhand the accused,” cried the Grand Inquisitor,

Inquisitor, with a chilling frown. "Leave her at liberty to approach. In compassion, you will be permitted to remain near her."

Fearful of being entirely separated, Rosalia made an effort to break from the supporting arms of the Marchese, while the Count Guidoni and the Duke most reluctantly retreated a few steps.

An awful silence ensued. At length Agnes Seville was commanded to appear.

The young woman stood forward. The tears that trickled down her cheeks, shewed how much she had felt in witnessing the recent scene. The terror she was in on Rosalia's account, had banished all fears for self, and she answered the questions which were now proposed to her, with a simplicity and correctness far different from the manner in which she had given her deposition on her former examination.

While Agnes was strongly affirming that she had never seen any thing like love between Rosalia and Don Hernandez, the

latter smiled contemptuously, and even interrupted her.

“ I informed you, Holy Fathers,” said he, “ that this ignorant girl was totally unacquainted with Signora Rosalia’s real sentiments. Can it be supposed that, unless it had been to aid my own purpose, I would have given my intended bride so rusticated an attendant ?”

“ She must, however, be heard,” replied the Grand Inquisitor ; then, turning to Rosalia, he said—“ It appears extremely singular, that you, Rosalia di Romanzini, did not refer us to the testimony of this young woman.”

Rosalía, greatly agitated, replied—

“ You may not now recollect, Holy Father, that, on my first appearance before this sacred tribunal, I mentioned Agnes Seville, whose evidence I then hoped would vindicate my innocence. The strong conviction which you have at present appeared to entertain of my being guilty,

guilty, led me to imagine that her depositions had been already taken, and were found not of sufficient weight to clear me from the inhuman charge; therefore, to have urged a repetition of her evidence, seemed to me to be not only useless, but might have involved her in the ruin which impends over me."

Agnes was now ordered to proceed; but though her simple relation of all the facts to which she had been witness, bore evident marks of truth, yet still it could not prove that Rosalia had not secretly favoured the pretensions of Hernandez, nor that the murder of Zellida had not been premeditated.

When the examination of Agnes had ceased, the Inquisitors conversed together in an under tone, while their solemn and earnest looks excited the most fearful expectation. At length the Marchese di Romanzini was called upon, to declare whether Don Hernandez had ever solicited his permission to address his daughter.

The

The Marchese, to the great surprise of Rosalia, answered in the affirmative, and stated the reasons which had induced him to reject his proposals.

He was then asked whether he had ever known or suspected his daughter to be tenderly attached to the prisoner.

In reply to this question, the Marchese solemnly affirmed, that, so far from entertaining a partiality for Don Hernandez, she had disposed of her heart to the Count Guidoni, some time prior to that on which Hernandez made application for her hand—a circumstance of which he had never informed his daughter.

The Grand Inquisitor now addressing Rosalia, said—

“ The Marchese’s acknowledgment of Don Hernandez de Marino’s application is not in your favour; it rather confirms the truth of the charges brought against you. I fear you can make no just defence.”

The Marchese, pale and agitated, attempted to speak, but was instantly silenced

lenced by the Grand Inquisitor, who now declared, that if his Lordship or his companions interfered further in the business, unless they were addressed by the tribunal, they should be ordered from the hall.

Despair, silent and dreadful, took possession of the hearts of the agonized relatives and lover of Rosalia—an overwhelming dread of being suddenly and for ever separated from the lovely object of their fondest regards, alone suspended their remonstrances.

The Grand Inquisitor, again turning to Rosalia, said—

“ I must repeat, I think your guilt unquestionable. I imagine you can produce no witnesses in your favour?”

“ No, Holy Father,” after a momentary hesitation, replied Rosalia, in faltering accents, more agitated by a keen sense of the agonies endured by those beloved objects, who were the sad spectators of her sufferings, than alarmed at her own dreadful situation ; “ I can only again repeat
my

my solemn declaration—I am innocent; I leave my cause to the Most High.”

While she faintly uttered these few words, the countenance of Hernandez underwent visible alteration. His eyes were fixed on her; an air of irresolution pervaded his features: but suddenly glancing on the distracted Guidoni, the deadly glare of hatred again became predominant, and he seemed but the more determined to persist in his diabolic purpose.

“ Rosalia di Romanzini,” said the Grand Inquisitor, “ you will do well to confess your crimes. Your accuser, after suffering on the rack, has insisted on your guilt. Do not compel us to put *you* to the question.”

Rosalia, clasping her hands, raised her eyes to Heaven. The Marchese fell back into the arms of his son, while the Count, in speechless grief and horror, caught the lovely sufferer to his aching heart. The demoniac expression of Hernandez’s countenance was now terrific!

“ She

“ *She is guilty, Holy Fathers!*” shrieked the monster, madly viewing Rosalia supported by the trembling arms of Guidoni. —“ *She is guilty!*”

Again was he pronouncing the horrid falsehood, when, turning his wild eyes towards the tribunal, he beheld, exactly opposite to him, the ghastly form of the murdered Zellida! Her large eyes glared motionless. Her long dark hair, waving over her shoulder, shaded part of her ashy check, and her sable robe was stained with blood!

Hernandez gazed in speechless terror. His fascinated eyes were fixed by horrible attraction on the dreadful object, while his quivering lip and prominent eyeballs denoted the horror of his soul. The figure stood without motion, regarding him with a look of undescribable penetration and reproving severity.

The horror of Hernandez arose almost to frenzy. A deep groan burst from his guilty breast: his whole frame shook with convulsive

convulsive tremor. At length he exclaimed, in hollow broken accents—

“ Art thou the shadowy illusion of my disordered fancy, or the avenging messenger of the Eternal?”

The death-like Zellida replied in a deep and solemn tone, while her uplifted hand pointed above—

“ A few short hours, and thou appearest at the tribunal of the Most High! Wilt thou dare to appear *there* unrepentant, and newly stained with the blood of the innocent?”

Hernandez trembled violently. The idea that a supernatural being stood before him, and, with emphatic warning, brought conviction of another world, harrowed up every feeling of his mind. Eager to free his soul from some portion of its load of guilt, he tremulously exclaimed—

“ Rosalia is innocent—she is innocent! Oh! hide me from that dreadful vision! I proclaim aloud,” he suddenly shrieked, still wildly gazing on the object of his
terror,

terror, “ she is innocent !—Rosalia di Romanzini is innocence itself !”

Life now seemed to have fled from his ghastly features, and he fell back insensible.

The consternation and silence which reigned in the hall was now succeeded by the murmuring whispers of astonishment and anxious expectation.

“ Behold,” said the figure, pointing to the horror-struck Hernandez, “ how guilt trembles at, and shrinks from the appalling shadows of its own creation ! Look up, thou murderous apostate, and behold in me, thy vile associate, the abandoned Rimaldi, and the wretched Zellida, who lives to spare thee the commission of another crime, so horrible that nature shudders at the idea, and which none but a fiend-like spirit durst have attempted !—Yes, Zellida lives—and lives,” she added, “ to save the innocent, and to witness the just condemnation of the false accuser !—Yes, inhuman, the *hour of retribution* is arrived !”

During

During this speech Hernandez revived : his eyes again rested on the form of Zelida. Confusion and rage darkened his striking features, as he caught the concluding sentence, and breathless with fury, he exclaimed—

“ Live—dost thou *really live!*”

“ Thy guilty conscience pictured me a shade!” she replied.

“ Distraction!” madly exclaimed Hernandez, directing his wild and fiery glances with contemptuous scorn on the Inquisitors. “ Does this assembly deign to employ delusive mockery to extort confession?”

“ Lost, abandoned wretch!” returned the Grand Inquisitor, half rising from his seat, “ silence thy impious tongue, lest the fiercest torture rid the world of thy detested being !”

The officials, receiving at that instant the usual signal, advanced, and seizing the raving Hernandez, bore him from the hall, which resounded with the horrible maledictions

dictions he poured forth on the noble sufferers, who shrunk with horror from the dreadful expressions of his enfrenzied rage.

Silence being again restored, the Grand Inquisitor, addressing the Marchese, said—

“Frederico, Marchese di Romanzini, approach, and declare whether you have ever, till now, beheld the prisoner, Zellida, Countess Rimaldi?”

The Marchese drew near the tribunal. The glare of a suspended tripod lamp shone full on the wan countenance of Zellida: guilt and horror had not yet effaced the beauty for which she had once been eminently distinguished. Her form still retained its graceful symmetry. A faint indistinct recollection of her features crossed the mind of the Marchese.

The wretched Zellida perceived his incertitude. She raised her eyes, suffused with the tears of penitence, and said, in a low and thrilling tone—

“You do not remember me—you do
not,

not, in this pale countenance, where vice has marked its long dominion, perceive a resemblance to the once innocent and happy—*Olivia di Mettelli!*”

“Gracious Heaven! is it possible!” exclaimed the Marchese, recoiling with astonishment and horror.

“Oh, do not—do not drive me to endless despair!” said the agonized Olivia.

“Low at your feet, I sue for mercy and forgiveness. There is a sad memorial of my guilt: This penitent heart dictated that confession. To avenge your injuries, I have sought death! Oh, render not the pangs of remorse, during the intervening hours of approaching punishment, more terrible! Oh, pronounce my pardon, ere you hear the dreadful detail which will inform you, that, in *me*, you behold the murderer of your wife, your——”

“Arise. These violent bursts of remorse, Olivia di Mettelli,” interrupted the Grand Inquisitor, “tend only to render the Marchese unhappy. He has already
heard

heard the memorial; but till this night he remained ignorant of the nature of the charges brought against his daughter: the best atonement, therefore, you can make for the injuries you have heaped upon the house of Di Romanzini, is to proceed in any evidence which may prove that Rosalia di Romanzini was taken by *force* from her friends. You have acknowledged yourself to be the writer of the memorial: the abrupt manner in which it was broken off, leaves us much to learn. But before you enter upon the particulars of such facts as follow the statement of those already laid before this assembly, you are required to declare how and when you first became acquainted with the Marchese di Romanzini."

Olivia sighed deeply. A thousand torturing recollections seemed to agonize her mind. At length, in a low and sad tone, she said—

"About a year prior to the Marchese's marriage, he was introduced to me at Padua,

dua, by Vincenzo Spignola, who was at that time paying his addresses to me. This man loved me, and I fancied that I returned his affection ; but the moment I beheld the Marchese, I found that *he* alone had power to touch my heart. In the hope of frequently seeing the Marchese, and rendering him sensible of my attractions, I continued to encourage the addresses of Spignola ; being aware that if I dismissed him, the visits of his noble friend would terminate with his, and the thought of no longer beholding the man I loved, was insupportable. Deluded by the polite assiduities, and fascinating manners of the Marchese, I fancied I had made an impression on his heart ; and imagining that the want of opportunity alone prevented his declaring his passion for me, I resolved to put an end to suspense, and, madly overstepping the bounds of female decorum, I wrote to him :—immediately after the receipt of my letter, he quitted Padua. In a fit of distraction, I left for ever the
scene

scene of my early days, and followed him to Florence. Before I could obtain an interview with the Marchese, my retreat was discovered by Spignola, who had pursued me. Having bitterly upbraided me with perfidy, he tauntingly averred to me, that Di Romanzini had laughed immoderately at my folly, and had left Padua merely to avoid my ridiculous persecutions. To convince me that his assertions were true, he presented me with a billet, every line in which breathed scorn and contempt, in terms more forcible than Spignola had described. This epistle was signed Di Romanzini."

"It was a forgery," said the Marchese.

Olivia, in extreme emotion, paused a moment. She then resumed—

"The contents of this letter threw me into violent convulsions, and for several days I continued extremely ill. When I recovered, a spirit of deep revenge took possession of my soul. I consented to remain with Spignola. He no longer offered

to make me his wife, nor did I once urge him on the subject.

“ As the mistress of this man, I accompanied him to France, and from thence to Germany. The splendid appearance I made, and the admiration which followed my steps, gratified my pride and vanity; and, in a continual round of dissipation, I daily became more and more depraved. Spignola, the easy dupe of my artifices, I soon led into a habit of gaming, and he quickly lost the small share of principles he had till then retained. A series of deceptive practices at length totally ruined his character. We were compelled to fly precipitately from France, and journeyed with the utmost expedition into Germany. At Vienna, where we assumed the titles of Count and Countess Rimaldi, Spignola observed more precaution than he had done while in Paris; yet becoming more devoted to his darling vice, gaming, and less attached to me, he regarded my conduct with indifference, and at length seemed to

to be highly pleased with the liberality of my lovers, amongst whom was a Neapolitan, named the Count del Caro. This young nobleman prevailed on me to leave Spignola, and fly with him to Naples, where I had been about a week, when I met the Marchese attending the Lady Adelaide di Orenza on the Corso. The alteration in my appearance would have prevented the Marchese recognising me, had he regarded me: I was no longer the apparently modest, simple Olivia, but the confident and magnificent courtesan. My heart sickened as I beheld the tender respectful attentions he lavished on his beautiful companion. While gazing on this object of my jealous envy, I encountered the eye of the Duke di Orenza. He turned away: a faint trait of mingled pity and contempt crossed his features. I hastily left the Corso. Returning home, I learned from Del Caro, that, in three days, the Marchese was to become the husband of the Lady Adelaide.

“ All the deadly dispositions of my heart were now awakened ; and I resolved to deprive my hated rival of life.”

Olivia paused. A faint expression of horror had passed the lips of Rosalia, which confused the wretched speaker. She hesitated to proceed, till the voice of the Grand Inquisitor commanded her to do so.

“ I was eagerly watching for an opportunity to effect my horrid purpose, when the relations of the Count del Caro, incensed at his connexion with me, suddenly carried me off. Before we reached the Convent of Force, to which I understood my guards had received orders to convey me, it was my fate to be rescued by Spignola, and a party of his associates. With this man I fled to Spain. I had been but a short time at Madrid, when Don Hernandez de Marino joined the throng that surrounded me. He had not the reputation of possessing great wealth, nevertheless he lavished considerable sums on me, but always with injunctions to secrecy

crecy on this subject, which I invariably observed. Passionately attached to Hernandez, I now remembered the Marchese only with hatred and——”

“ You are not required to recapitulate any of the particulars you have stated in the memorial,” interrupted the Grand Inquisitor. “ That your private motives for aiding the designs against the happiness of the Di Romanzini family, were rancorous jealousy, and a vindictive desire of avenging the slight you imagined you had received, your own words have already sufficiently declared ; it were therefore needless for you to continue the subject. Proceed to inform us in what manner Rosalia di Romanzini was taken from her family.”

“ When Hernandez had taken leave of the Count Alvanio,” continued Olivia, “ he returned with speed to the Castle di Riverra : having hastened to the caverns, he there communicated to me all the in-

formation he had obtained from the Count. The demoniac love of revenge still burned in my guilty bosom. A sensation of malignant joy thrilled through my frame, as he described the situation of the villa, where the noble family of Di Romanzini mostly resided. A scheme, in the execution of which I resolved to take an active part, was now formed for the carrying off the Lady Rosalia. As it was impossible for the brigantine to keep hovering about the shores of Italy, for the length of time which the projected undertaking might require, Hernandez, through means of Zanga, purchased a small galley for the purpose. In this vessel, which was elegantly fitted up, were placed a few of those men on whom Zanga could depend. These were clad in Christian habits, and their safety farther ensured by Maltese colours. Having embarked on board this galley, I at length reached the place of destination; and was in Naples about three weeks previous

vious to the period on which I accomplished the horrible design that brought me to Italy.

“ By the artful address and management of Pedro, who was the only one that durst venture to accompany me on shore, I daily became acquainted with every thing that occurred in the family of the Marchese. The evening walks, which I heard the young Duke and the affianced lovers frequently took to a cliff, remote from the villa, promised to present a most favourable opportunity for the execution of my iniquitous plan.

“ After watching about the cliffs for many evenings successively, without being able to effect my purpose, though I repeatedly saw the youthful party repair to their favourite haunt, and retire from thence, on their return to the villa, I began to imagine that the success of my enterprise depended on the removal of the Count Guidoni, whose arm, nerved by

virtuous love, and raised in such a cause, I dreaded might prove fatal to some of the Moors, if not frustrate the scheme, especially when aided by the Duke, who was always the companion of these walks. For this end, I caused a message, as from an intimate friend at the point of death, to be delivered to the Count, by a man who had been hired by Pedro for the occasion. The Count fell into the snare. He hurried to Naples. On entering an obscure part of the suburbs, he was suddenly seized, by several men, who dragged him into a dilapidated adjacent building. The instructions I had given were, that he should be closely confined, until an order should be sent for his liberation, and which Pedro had contrived the means of having conveyed to the ruffians, when the confinement of the Count should no longer be necessary.—But I have since had reason to believe that this man acted treacherously in the affair, as he once intimated, in my hearing, that his Lord had entrusted

entrusted him with a large sum of money, with orders to have the Count assassinated; but that the villains were so exorbitant in their demands, he could not resolve to comply with them; nor was there any need for so doing, when some weeks confinement would answer the purpose, after which they might do what they pleased with their prisoner."

"Count Guidoni," said the Grand Inquisitor, "at what period did you escape from the power of the assassins?"

"After a confinement which lasted nearly six weeks, Holy Father," replied the Count.

"In what manner did you then obtain your liberty?"

"The doors of the building being one night left open," returned Guidoni, "I quitted the place unmolested. The cause of my having been left thus at liberty, proceeded, I imagine, from some sudden alarm, which occasioned the villains to fly precipitately. From several expressions which dropped from one of the ruffians,

I understood that the instructions they had originally received, were to deprive me of life, and that the hope of extorting more money than their employers were willing to give, induced them to suspend my fate for a time."

While the Count spoke, Rosalia, almost unconscious of her own sufferings, tremblingly listened to his account of the dangers he had escaped. Guidoni, anxious only for her safety, could scarcely answer collectively. When he ceased, the Grand Inquisitor commanded Olivia to proceed.

"Being apprised of the Count's departure," resumed she, "and not doubting but that Signora Rosalia would console herself for his absence, by frequenting a spot which was doubtless endeared to her by the remembrance of the evenings they had passed there together, I sent orders to the galley, which was then lying at anchor beneath the cliffs, to have a boat in readiness to send off to a particular spot, at the foot of the rocks, the moment the Moors should

should perceive a préconcerted signal : to mislead suspicion, should the attempt succeed, I likewise ordered that the boat's crew should resume their Moorish habits, and to be well armed.

“ With all the eagerness of malice, I watched amidst the woody heights. The second evening advanced, and I beheld the Duke and his sister approaching. They entered the rustic bower. Full of malignant joy, I flew down the cliff, and gave the signal. It was instantly attended to : the Moors came on shore, surrounded the Duke and a domestic, both of whom, in despite of the violent resistance made by the former, they bound to trees, and carried off Signora Rosalia, who, uttering the most piercing lamentations, was conveyed into the boat, which was rowed with incredible exertion back to the galley, on board of which she was removed in a state of insensibility.

“ That I did not cause the young Lord Vivonio to be torn also from the arms of

his much-injured parent," continued Olivia, "or suffer a dagger to be struck to his heart, as the reward of the valiant efforts he made to preserve his lovely sister, may appear inconsistent with the implacable malice which had hitherto marked my conduct towards the noble house of Di Romanzini. But, by such contradictions is vice governed, that, while I hated the father, I loved his image in his son. Vivonio was infinitely dear to my heart. I loved him, with maternal affection, from the moment I first received him into my arms: for years he was the object of all my secret cares. To induce the Abbot of San Jerome to bestow on him every advantage of education, which the situation would allow of, I sent, with the annual remittances made by Hernandez, presents of considerable value. It was my fixed resolve, that, while the Marchese lived, his son should remain in monastic seclusion; yet it was equally my intention, when the hour of his decease should have arrived,

to forsake the caverns, to proclaim the wrongs and the rights of the injured Vivonio, and then to die ;—for life had no longer any charms for me.—Yet the stings of remorse, I knew not : a tormenting sense of slighted affection, and an innate love of revenge, animated all my actions ; and I was often conscious, that, when these impulses should fail, my spirits and my life would end also.”

Olivia paused. A dead silence succeeded. The energetic animation, which, while she proceeded in her recital, had added dignity and grace to the noble figure of Olivia, now vanished : with streaming eyes, and drooping form, she bent towards the ground, to conceal the anguish which tore her heart.

At length the Grand Inquisitor asked whether she had aught else to communicate?

“ Yes, Holy Father,” she replied, “ I have still to relate the incidents which followed the transition of my heart from
vice

vice to penitence. But *can* I describe," added she, wildly, " the agonies of an awakened conscience? What language—what form of expression, can give any idea of those dreadful torments which offended Heaven suffers to gnaw on the breaking heart of guilt? Ah! how vain the attempt! Who shall describe the self-aborrence, the hopelessness of mercy, the wish of annihilation, the internal consciousness, that there *is* a God, *just* and *tremendous* in his anger! Yet, ah! thou glorious, awful Power!" she fervently ejaculated, falling on her knee, while her uplifted eyes beamed with the enthusiasm of pious hope, " *mercy* is the brightest of thy attributes: the contrite sigh, the tear of penitence, never pleads in vain with *Thee*; and the wretch who meets with a just punishment from *man*, may hope for *pardon* from his God!"

Olivia arose: her air was now more collected, and, in a tone of meek humility, she proceeded—

“ The

“ The moment that Signora Rosalia was brought on board the vessel, was the last of my fiend-like pleasure. She was carried, cold and inanimate, into the cabin, whither I followed. The Moors laid their lifeless burthen on a sofa, then hurried on deck. The vessel instantly got under weigh. I gazed on the lovely victim. My feelings at that moment were undescribable: a bright moonbeam, at intervals lost by the heaving of the vessel, passed over her pale features. My brain seemed on fire. Instead of endeavouring to restore her senses, I stood motionless. The form before me appeared to assume that of the Marchesa di Romanzini. Cries of murder seemed to ring in my ears—my sight became dim—a sickly horror chilled my frame—a deep and heavy sigh burst from my tortured breast! At that instant the beautiful image of the Marchesa unclosed her eyes. They fell for a moment on me, and she relapsed into insensibility. Distracting, horrible ideas of death and

eternal

eternal judgment, seized my soul! I rushed wildly from the cabin on the deck! The Moors stood astonished at my frenzied looks. To their enquiries, I answered incoherently; but as it was usual to see me at times wild and inconsistent in my conduct, they were satisfied with my replies. I stole from the deck, and, in a state of mind not to be described, nor imagined, sat at the door of the cabin, listening to catch the least sound which might assure me that the hapless Rosalia lived:—an idea that the fright had killed her, had taken firm possession of my mind; and I shuddered at the thought of beholding the pallid corse.

“They must have felt as I did, to conceive the strange emotion which agitated me, when at length I heard her soft voice, uttering the plaintive expressions of grief. What I then experienced, language can give no idea of: it was not joy. I was now convinced that she lived, but I had no cause of felicity. The momentary
gleam

gleam of satisfaction fled, as the fate to which she was destined rose to my view. Ah! misery of remorse, when felt too late! I would with transport have given my life to have restored her to those arms from whence I had torn her; but, alas! I was powerless! For nearly two hours I remained in this situation, listening at intervals to the deep sighs and pathetic complaints of the innocent sufferer. Vainly did I attempt to devise means to save her from her impending fate. To prevail on the Moors to return to Italy, I well knew would be impossible; to render her, therefore, every accommodation on the voyage, and to assist her to make her escape when we should have arrived in Spain, were the only alternatives I could pursue. Rather composed by the hope of succeeding in the latter respect, I went again upon deck, and having prepared a repast, ordered two of the Moors to serve it in the cabin, whither I also attended: yet I had required the attendance of these men only

only because I durst not encounter her glances alone. Whilst I arranged the refreshments, she attentively regarded me, then timidly enquired whither she was to be conveyed? I remained silent. She repeated the question. I answered evasively. Having in vain strove to prevail on her to take refreshment, I recommended repose; and after conducting her to the cabin appropriated to her use, I left her for the night—a night which I passed under all the horrors of my awakened conscience. And, oh, with what misery did I attend in the morning on the couch of the lovely captive! Not daring to deviate from the plan I had arranged, I was compelled to insist on her submitting to wear the rich attire provided for her use. Alas! the sight of this sumptuous apparel added to my torments:—almost every article had been selected, by Hernandez, from the plunder brought to the caverns by his infidel associates. I trembled as I arrayed her lovely form in these habiliments, which
were

were but the too certain signs of her intended fate. To conceal the internal anguish of my mind, was a task most difficult. My real sentiments were, however, carefully veiled, and Rosalia considered me only as the slave devoted to the will of her employer. I forbore to entrust her with my design of restoring her to liberty, lest the knowledge of such an intention might create hopes I might not be able to realize. To offer her consolation, I did not dare.—Ah! would not the soothing of friendship have blistered the lips of her mother's murderer!"

Olivia's voice faltered. She paused: her eyes fixed on Rosalia. It was evident that her thoughts were rather deranged. In a few moments, however, she recovered from her wild agitation, and proceeded.

"At length we arrived at Riverra. Hernandez was quickly informed of my success. No words can describe the mad rapture he expressed: his transports were unbounded, and he loaded me with rich gifts,

gifts, and endless promises. But could he have bestowed worlds, not all could have calmed the tumult which swelled my guilty bosom. The hope of rescuing Signora Rosalia from the horrible situation in which she now was, alone gave me power to support the dreadful conflict.

“ My presence being required in the caverns, a young person, named Agnes Seville, was now provided to fill my place as attendant on Signora di Romanzini. This girl being a relation of Pedro's, was an object of my keenest alarm. I considered her as a spy, who would infallibly disappoint the execution of the project I had formed :—that this opinion was erroneous, I soon found.

“ The chambers in the south tower communicated by means of a narrow passage, artfully contrived in the thick walls, and which opened behind the altar, in a small oratory belonging to the suite of rooms in which Signora di Romanzini was confined. By this passage I twice privately entered

entered the apartments, and each time overheard conversations that convinced me Agnes was a simple innocent girl, who would gladly aid in any attempt to restore her lady to liberty. But the deep sighs of Signora Rosalia, the plaintive tone of her voice, filled me with so poignant a grief, that, to prevent alarming her and betraying myself, I staid no longer at these times than was necessary to fix the opinion I had newly conceived of Agnes.

“ At length I finally determined to communicate to Signora di Romanzini the design I had formed. For this purpose I again repaired to the apartments; but after passing through the whole suite, I found, to my amazement, that they were deserted. The fearful apprehension that Hernandez had removed her to some part of the castle, to which I might be debarred access, nearly distracted me. Scarcely knowing what I did, I rushed from the antichamber, and flew along the corridor of the black marble hall; there, to my
excessive

excessive joy, I beheld Signora Rosalia and her attendant passing through the door which led from this corridor into the tower. Shading the light I carried, I followed their steps, and was a concealed witness of a very minute search the Signora was making, evidently in the hope of finding some secret passage to escape by. At length she discovered the opening at the top of the stone steps leading to the vaults. Trembling with an idea that she might descend thither, and by entering the splendid scenes of vice, accelerate her fate, I thought that, by terrifying, I should deter her from making so dangerous an attempt. With this view, I walked slowly across the room, and having entered a closet, retreated through a sliding panel in the wainscoting ; well convinced, by the horror and amazement my appearance had excited, that all thought of descending the steps was banished for that night.

“ On

“ On the following day, Hernandez quitted the castle, on concerns of a political nature, which required his immediate attendance. He had scarcely departed when I was taken so extremely ill, that I could not move from the caverns. The agony of mind I suffered at being incapable of seeing Signora Rosalia, at a time which the absence of Hernandez rendered so favourable to my wish, increased my indisposition, and I was still confined when he returned. On the following morning he entered my apartment, and, to my horror and dismay, informed me that the Signora, on the preceding night, had gained admittance to the caverns, and had discovered the secrets of the place—a circumstance which seemed to render him almost frantic—as it was not his intention to introduce her there till she had become reconciled to consider him as her protector. After some time, however, he began to console himself with the reflection, that, having bound her, as he asserted

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he had done, by a solemn oath, to secrecy, the religious light in which she would ever regard the obligation, would keep him in perfect security, were there even a possibility of her ever re-appearing in the world.

‘ She is mine for life,’ he added. ‘ Too long have I submitted to be governed by her whims. I will allow her a fortnight from hence to consider of my proposals, which, to silence her scruples, have always included marriage; but so much do I abhor the matrimonial tie, that, were I to obtain her willing consent, Pedro alone should unite our hands. If she refuses me——’

Olivia paused. Confused and agitated, she dared not lift her eyes towards the Marchese and his family, whose feelings at this moment she too well defined. The Grand Inquisitor put a period to this short silence, by enquiring from what circumstance had the passage, leading to the caverns, been so carelessly left open?

To

To this question Olivia replied, that she had herself left it so, a short time previous to Signora Rosalia's entering the tower chamber.

“ Hernandez,” she continued, “ for years after the death of Victoria de Avilla, never once entered the south wing; the stair leading to the tower chambers was, therefore, never frequented but by me and Pedro, and by us only at intervals, for the purpose of making singular noises, and causing dim lights to appear at the windows. By the frequent repetition of these artifices, the idea of this part of the castle being haunted, was so strengthened in the minds of the domestics, that, for many years, one young woman only was hardy enough to venture into the uninhabited apartments. Her life, alas! was the sacrifice: the unfortunate Inis died in consequence of the fright she received, from a stratagem which had been concerted to, terrify her, that her report might deter others from the like attempt. From that

hour the south wing became an object of such general dread and horror, that not one of the domestics would venture near it. Hernandez could, therefore, with the utmost privacy, make whatever arrangements he chose there. During the time I was absent in Italy, the suite of apartments which, should the undertaking succeed, he had selected for the reception of Signora Rosalia, were divested of the articles they contained, and refurnished in a more splendid stile by the Moors. Immediately after the arrival of the Signora, the door that opens from the corridor into the tower was carefully locked, and the key entrusted to my care. How Signora di Romanzini gained admittance into this tower, was therefore a mystery to Hernandez, till Pedro going sometime after to the room appropriated to Agnes, found a bunch of rusty keys—a circumstance that banished from the mind of his Lord all suspicion of neglect or collusion.”

“ Confined

“ Confined so closely to the caverns as you were, in what manner could you hope to effect the release of Rosalia di Romanzini?” enquired an Inquisitor.

“ I was not totally confined to the caverns,” returned Olivia; “ for though I durst not appear in the castle, I sometimes, in the habit of a hunter, walked out on the mountains. But notwithstanding I possessed this liberty, the difficulties which opposed the accomplishment of my wishes, respecting Signora Rosalia, were so numerous, that I often sunk under the dread of being obliged to abandon the design. To gain any assistant who would procure mules, or a vessel, was impossible; yet I determined, at all events, to get her out of the castle, and conceal her in a small recess, known only to myself, where she might remain till her quitting Spain might be attempted with safety. This, however, I felt would be impracticable, while Hernandez continued at liberty. The insupportable agony this reflection gave me,

joined to the bitter remorse, which preyed on my mind, suggested the means which alone could deprive Hernandez of that freedom of which he had ever made so ill a use. I resolved to denounce him. While confined to my chamber, I wrote the memorial ; that employment, by relieving my mind, restored me, in some degree, to health : but as I could find opportunity of writing only at short intervals, the detail, from being necessarily minute, took up much time ; and ere I had concluded it, Hernandez, wearied with vain efforts to effect a change in the sentiments of Signora di Romanzini, intimated an intention of bringing her to the caverns. For this purpose, he resolved to send every young woman in those splendid prisons away. I dared not advise a contrary procedure, lest he should have suspected me of some interested view. Much as I wished to finish the memorial, I now found it would be impossible. The bare mention of his designing to remove Signora Rosalia to the
subterranean

subterranean abodes, filled me with such horror, that, to prevent the detestable act, I determined to send off the memorial in the unfinished state it was, and afterwards use every possible means to take her from his power ; or if I failed in these endeavours, to persuade him to respect his lovely prisoner, till the authority of the Holy Office should interfere.

“As the present exigence would not admit of a moment’s delay, I sealed up the packet, and having directed it, waited with impatience the approach of evening, when, disguised in the garb of a peasant, I set out. Providence appeared to aid my penitential endeavours ; for I had proceeded scarcely half a mile towards a Convent of Franciscan Monks, about a league from the castle, when I met one of the brotherhood, returning from the cottage of an expiring peasant. I instantly addressed the Father in the simple dialect of a mountaineer, and pretended that I had been sent by a stranger to deliver the packet I held in

my hand to the Abbot of San Anthonio ; but that being ill, I feared I should not be able to reach the Convent. I then begged the holy Father to deliver it himself, which he readily undertook to do, and we parted. In the envelope that contained the memorial, I had written a few lines to the Abbot, requesting him to send the enclosure, with all possible speed, to Madrid ; and, as it was addressed to the Holy Office, I had no doubt but that instant attention would be paid to my request.

“ A few days after I had dispatched the memorial, the brigantine sailed with all the Moors, and the young females who had resided in the caverns : Hernandez being determined not to suffer Signora di Romanzini to be seen by, or to behold any other mortal than himself, me, and the two attendants, Pedro and Agnes.

“ With infinite difficulty I prevailed on him to defer the execution of his intention respecting the Signora, for a few days ; but though he acceded to my entreaties,

I observed

I observed that my intercession in her behalf had excited his suspicions: it was therefore necessary for me to be extremely cautious and wary in every step I took. Fortunately at this period I had no longer occasion to repair to the recess, as since the arrival of Signora Rosalia, I had at different times conveyed thither a great number of valuable and useful articles, considerable sums of money, and a large quantity of jewels; nor had I omitted to place there every kind of provision preserved for keeping. In this retreat I had no doubt that the Signora would remain in perfect security. The entrance, which is almost concealed by a thicket of shrubs, lays about a quarter of a mile down the rocks that run along the south side of the castle. A small trap-door, the inner part of which is wood, ingeniously covered by a slight piece of craggy stone, and which, when closed, cannot be distinguished from the rock, opens on a narrow sloping passage,

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sage, cut in the rock, and terminated by a small square room.

“ But in vain did I flatter myself with the hope of removing the Signora to this recess, for, from the hour the Moors departed, all my attempts to see her were unsuccessful, my footsteps being incessantly watched by Pedro, until one night when his vigilance seeming to relax, I eagerly seized the opportunity to hasten to her apartments, which I entered by the secret way I had formerly done. My appearance alarmed the Signora, who was at her devotions. I disclosed to her the occasion of my visit, and prevailed on her to accompany me. But that Pedro had not been so remiss as I had imagined, was manifested by the sudden appearance of Hernandez, at the moment when I was conducting her from the black marble hall. Transported with rage, he proclaimed me to be the murderer of the Marchesa ! Signora di Romanzini sunk beneath the shock.

I flew

I flew to her, and while taking her icy hand, Hernandez plunged a poniard in my bosom, then raising her in his arms, bore her lifeless from the hall! That he concluded the blow had deprived me of life, was evinced by his evidently supposing my appearance here supernatural; but what instigated him to accuse this innocent lady of the murder, can only be known to himself. That omnipotent Power, who never fails to sustain suffering virtue, nor to avenge the injured, permitted not Hernandez to accomplish his design on *my* life, that my appearance and testimony before this sacred tribunal might refute the dreadful charge he so inhumanly exhibited against this most injured and most virtuous lady!"

Olivia ceased. The Grand Inquisitor, after a slight pause, said—

"Of the innocence of Rosalia di Romanzini, we can no longer doubt; therefore this holy tribunal, whose lenity she has singularly experienced, pronounces

her guiltless of the charge alledged against her."

How vain to attempt to paint the joy of the virtuous family, who, though not doubting the acquittal of Rosalia, had tremblingly awaited the sentence of this dread tribunal! imagination alone can conceive the transports of the Marchese, the Duke, and the Count, while the charming object of their tenderest affections participated in the rapture felt by each, doubly prizing her own safety, because it constituted the felicity of those so truly dear.

The affecting half-suppressed effusions of unbounded joy, were checked by the Grand Inquisitor, who now said—

"Marchese di Romanzini, have you any questions to propose to the prisoner, Olivia di Metelli?"

The Marchese, endeavouring to recollect himself, replied—

"Very few, Holy Father;" then addressing Olivia, he said—

“ Spignola then it was, who, under the assumed name of Lopez Vanilla, so long resided near the Convent of San Jerome?”

Olivia faintly replied in the affirmative.

“ Are you acquainted with the motive Spignola had for keeping in his own possession the clothes my son had on the night he was stolen from the villa?” enquired the Marchese.

“ No, my Lord,” returned Olivia; “ that they were found, after his death, in the cottage where he dwelt, was mentioned by the Count Alvanio to Don Hernandez, who informed me of the circumstance. What view Spignola had in taking them with him, I know not. I had placed them in a small cabinet, in a room in the south tower of the Castle de Riverra, whence he must have secretly taken them. It is most probable, he then meditated making a discovery.”

The Marchese continued silent. The sudden appearance of Olivia, at so awful a crisis, had excited his wonder, and he

now felt impelled to question her on a point that appeared so extraordinary; but apprehending that such a procedure would give offence to an assembly, whose proceedings were ever marked by profound secrecy, he forbore the enquiry.

The Grand Inquisitor, observing his silence, at length said—

“ You have no more questions to propose to the prisoner ? ”

“ No, Holy Father,” replied the Marchese.

The usual signal being now given, two officials immediately approached. Olivia shrunk from them, and turning her eyes towards the tribunal, she said, in a supplicating tone—

“ Oh, Holy Fathers, send me not hence until I have again implored the forgiveness of these injured virtuous beings ! ” Then turning to the Marchese—“ Surrounded, supported by these loved objects, refuse not your pardon to a wretch, tortured by the keenest agonies of remorse, and

and whose life will shortly expiate her crimes !”

The Marchese could not deny this petition ; for though he could not but regard Olivia as the murderer of his wife, and the cause of his subsequent distresses, yet as she had evinced the sincerity of her repentance, by proving the innocence of his newly-restored child, he endeavoured to banish the recollection of the past, and, turning to the unhappy suppliant, he said—

“ I forgive you. May your contrition obtain from Heaven that pardon which can alone avail !”

Olivia wept. Her uplifted hands and glistening eyes indicated the gratitude she now felt. An air of serious serenity succeeded the expression of deep sorrow that had marked her features. Meekly regarding the Marchese, she said—

“ May the comfort you have spoken to my breaking heart, be a million times repaid by that beneficent Being, whose holy laws

laws I have so transgressed ! In the filial piety of your children, look for your reward on earth. They who bend in humble obedience to their God, will never cease to fulfil with delight each relative duty. Oh, had I early sought the paths of peace——”

She paused. A deep and heavy sigh seemed to rend her heart. Suddenly recovering from the oppressive agony of her feelings, she turned towards the tribunal, and, in an elevated tone, said—

“ Publish *my* crimes—publish my fate, Holy Fathers, that, from the sad relation, *youth* may receive a warning lesson ! They will thence learn, that, by the early indulgence of impiety, they lay the foundation of incalculable evils and endless sufferings ! Oh, may they know that the heart which early seeks the knowledge of God, that beats with filial love and reverence for the author of its being, is *blessed*—that internal peace, the sweet reward of innocence, and an approving conscience, will

will sooth the rugged paths of life, and gild, with the brightest beams of *hope*, the dark confines of the grave ! From early youth, I ridiculed all sacred duties. The violent passions that reigned within my bosom, I called strength of mind and energy of feeling : the veil of art which hid my natural propensities from the world, I termed prudent conformity to the laws of society. Religion was contemptible in my eyes. I had discernment to perceive that the conduct of some of its teachers and professors, was at variance with their doctrines ; therefore, with all the *wisdom* and *matured judgment* of *seventeen*, I considered the former as a fable, and the latter cheats. With these opinions, no wonder I made a rapid progress in vice ! What had I to restrain me ?—The beauty of moral virtue. Weak, delusive subterfuge ! 'Tis the hope of eternal felicity which alone can truly animate virtue, and call forth all her native energies. Where is the human being that can walk
with

with *undeviating* steps in the narrow paths of rectitude, boldly opposing the various ills of life, without the steady support of faith that there is a God, who views the children of men, and weighs their actions in the balance of his justice! Oh, let youth seek in religion for their only guide and support! 'Tis her's to lead them into the ways of truth. One tear of fervent piety that wets the glowing cheek of innocence, is more valuable, more truly estimable, a surer *friend* to virtue, than all the boasted systems of philosophy!"

Again Olivia fixed her eyes on the Marchese. A fervent aspiration, for the happiness of the injured, passed her trembling lips. The officials approached. She threw another look of anguish on the Di Romanzini family, and then suffered herself to be conducted from the hall.

The Marchese was affected. A tear of angelic pity shone in the eyes of Rosalia, as she gazed after the now-repentant author of her own and family's distresses.

The

The Grand Inquisitor now gave some directions to the secretary, who immediately began to collect some papers which were spread upon the table, and then formed them into a packet.

Meanwhile the Marchese, addressing the tribunal, entreated to know whether he should be permitted to conduct his beloved daughter from the prisons of the Inquisition?

The Grand Inquisitor instantly replied in the affirmative, adding—

“ The innocence of Rosalia di Romanzini having been so fully proved, this sacred assembly can no longer consider her detention just.”—Then commanded the secretary to give to the Marchese the packet which had just been prepared for the purpose, and which was afterwards found to contain the copy of the memorial.

A few customary forms were then used, after which the Marchese was informed
that

that his daughter was at liberty, as was also her attendant, Agnes Seville, whose innocence had, from the first, been maintained even by Hernandez.

After returning the holy tribunal their grateful acknowledgements for the speedy termination of their suspense and trouble, the Marchese and his family were conducted from the hall, and soon found themselves beyond the dark walls of the Inquisition.

CHAP. IX.

WHILE the Marchese and his family are proceeding to the hotel, it will be necessary, in order to elucidate the mystery attached to Olivia's sudden appearance, at so critical a period, in the hall of the Inquisition, to return to the Castle de Riverra.

Though she had sunk beneath the severity of the blow she had received from the hand of the enraged Hernandez, on the night he surprised her in the attempt she was making to liberate Rosalia, yet her senses forsook her not. On being left alone in the hall, she arose, and finding the

the door, by which she had intended to finally quit the castle, still open, she exerted her utmost strength, and fled hastily down the rock.

Having reached the entrance of the secret retreat, to which she had purposed conducting Rosalia, she drew the stone over it, and, after fastening it on the inside, she descended to the cave, sensible that if she had been pursued, such was the nature of the fastening, that all attempts to raise the stone on the outside would now be ineffectual—of course, should any one endeavour to lift it, the impracticability of doing so would lead them to imagine that it was merely a projection of the rock.

As if she had had a presentiment of what had just befallen her, amongst the various necessary articles with which she had stored this place, was an excellent stiptic, and a number of healing balms, Her first care, after striking a light, and lighting a lamp, was bestowed on the wound

wound she had received. The stiptic soon stopped the effusion, and a cordial procured her a long and undisturbed sleep; from which she at length awoke much refreshed. Her thoughts were now wholly occupied by the situation of Rosalia—alone in the caverns, exposed to the cruelty of Hernandez: for that the officers of the Inquisition had already arrived at the castle, she did not entertain an idea. That it was now impossible to rescue the unhappy Rosalia, she felt a sad conviction, and her horror and remorse in consequence were excessive. The cure of her wound, which was not dangerous, was considerably retarded by the agonies of her mind, which became at length so insupportable, that she resolved to quit the place of her concealment, and brave every peril, to learn the fate of the Lady Rosalia.

Olivia had prudently conveyed into this cave several garments, for the purpose of disguising herself and Rosalia. Amongst these was the habit of a black Friar, which,
after

after having coloured her face and hands with a deep tawny hue, and altered, by other arts, the whole air of her countenance, she assumed, and, late one evening, sallied forth, with an intention to proceed to the castle.

The public character of Hernandez was famed for charity and hospitality ; it would therefore not be difficult to gain admittance into his abode, as a poor Friar benighted on his way. His domestics she knew had often been permitted to entertain the weary traveller, who generally departed unseen by their Lord. Depending on an uncommon facility she possessed of assuming any character, Olivia felt but little fear of being discovered ; nevertheless, she trembled as she approached the lofty walls. Surprised at finding the gates of the first court open, she paused a moment, then hesitatingly entered. The gates of the second court, she perceived, were likewise open. With increased wonder, she gazed at the parts of the edifice within her view:

view: no lights appeared in any of the windows—a solemn stillness reigned around. She walked on to the grand entrance: here the doors were fastened. Several times she rapped, but no one attended to the summons. The truth now flashed on her mind—the Inquisition had already claimed the delinquent, and Rosalia had doubtless been included in the arrestation. A pang of horror tore her heart, and she reeled, almost insensible, against the high stone pillars. The opening of the heavy doors roused her. She turned her eyes, and beheld an aged man, with a lamp in his hand, slowly pass the entrance, and look around him. Suppressing her emotion, she advanced, and entreated a lodging for the night.

The old man mildly desired her to follow him, then led the way into a small stone hall, enlivened by the blaze of a large fire, near which stood a little oak table, spread with a homely repast.

“ Ah, holy Father,” said the old man,
drawing

drawing a ponderous chair near the fire for his apparently-sacred guest, "how rejoiced I am that the saints have directed your steps hither! I was afraid I must always stay alone in this most abominable place."

Olivia, though enduring great inward emotion, did not lose sight of the character she personated. She enquired the cause of the dislike the old man expressed for the castle, and in return received an account of the arrest of Don Hernandez, and a beautiful young lady, who had been found with him in the caverns, together with the arrest of all the domestics. This account, which was interlarded with frightful exaggerations, and the fears of the reciter, who, it seemed, had been left in care of the castle, confirmed all the apprehensions of Olivia. Incapable of conquering the agonies she now felt, she pretended to be greatly fatigued, declined partaking the repast, and begged to be shewn to some place where she might rest.

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The old man conducted her to one of the chambers that had been occupied by the servants. Here she passed the night in all the agonies of a racked conscience, and long ere morning dawned, had formed a determination of informing the Marchese di Romanzini of his daughter's situation. Bitter were the reproaches with which she now loaded herself, for not having recourse to this measure, before matters had come to this alarming extremity. Circumstanced as she had been, the folly of depending solely on her own exertions, appeared now in the most glaring point of view, and contributed to her wretchedness. Could she have found opportunity to have finished the memorial, and therein have informed the Inquisitors, as she had designed, of the manner in which Rosalia was carried off, and of her having been held a prisoner in the castle, she would have suffered less terror on her account. But the circumstance of her having been found in the caverns, appeared

so likely to militate against her, that Olivia at length resolved to hasten to Madrid, the moment after she should have dispatched off a letter to the Marchese, and when there, give herself up to the Inquisition, as her confession would prove the innocence of the lovely prisoner, whose artless tale might fail to obtain that credence which alone could procure her enlargement.

Ere the sun arose, Olivia departed from the castle, and, having taken care before she left the cave to amply provide herself with money, she soon procured a mule, and pursued her way to Barcelona, at which place she wrote to the Marchese, and had no sooner sent off the letter than she proceeded on her journey to Madrid. When arrived there, she took up her residence at the Convent of San Ignatius, under the name of Father Birtran.

Here she had not remained three days, ere the terrors she felt respecting the fate of Rosalia entirely overcame the resistance
which

which the horror of rendering up life amidst the consuming flames of a burning pile, had not unfrequently opposed against them. A prophetic dread, that evils, till now unsurmised, impended over the lovely sufferer, threw her mind into so distracted a state, that she threw herself at the feet of the Abbot, related her whole story to him, and then declared an intention of delivering herself up to justice.

Father Francisco was a man of humane principles; possessing neither the flaming zeal of bigotry, nor the intolerant spirit of persecution, he loved Virtue wherever he found her.—With compassion he heard the penitent's tale: he soothed her mind, and though he commended her intention of giving herself up, yet he endeavoured to dissuade her from taking such a step, recommending her at the same time to take the veil, in some strict order, where, by years of penitence, she might obtain the hope of peace hereafter.

Olivia listened to these representations,

which soon produced the effect the good Father had wished for ; but before she had consented to follow his advice, she implored him to exert his interest with his brother, who she had heard was one of the members of the Inquisition, to procure some indulgences for Rosalia, until the arrival of the Marchese. The Father promised all she had required of him, and on the following day she quitted the Convent of San Ignatius.

Having exchanged her monkish habit for female attire, she repaired to a convent, whither she had been privately directed by the Abbot, and quickly found an asylum among the sisterhood.

Meanwhile, the Superior, faithful to his promise, paid a visit to his brother, the Inquisitor. As an unreserved confidence subsisted between these two relatives, the Abbot hesitated not to enquire after Rosalia, whom he confessed he knew to be a prisoner. In answer he was informed that she had been accused of the murder of
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the very person whose confession he had just received. Greatly shocked at this information, he with difficulty concealed his emotion. At length, however, he acknowledged that he felt himself interested for her, and besought his brother to procure for him some slight office in the Inquisition, which might enable him to see her.

This was at length accomplished, and Father Francisco was admitted within the massy walls. He soon discovered in what part of the prisons Rosalia was confined, and repaired thither. On seeing and conversing with her, those sentiments which were before but the mere offsprings of humanity, were now converted into the most heartfelt pity. Her piety—her youth—her extreme loveliness—her helpless situation, filled the compassionate heart of the Father with the most earnest desire of rescuing her from the impending fate; and, on quitting her, he sought his brother, to whom he spoke so feelingly of his being convinced of her innocence, that

the Inquisitor, observing his anxiety and emotion, promised to save her, if possible. The good Monk then requested his relative to use his interest to delay her trial for some time, as witnesses might hereafter be produced, who would prove the falsehood of the charge exhibited against her. The convent at which Olivia had taken up her abode, was a considerable distance from the capital. The Abbot now wrote to her, to inform her of the alarming predicament in which Rosalia stood, not doubting that if she was the penitent she professed herself to be, she would immediately step forward to clear the innocent. His conjecture was true, for she had no sooner read the contents of his letter, than she watched for an opportunity of leaving the convent, which having found, she secretly departed, and hastened to Madrid, where she arrived two days prior to the arrival of the Marchese.

Having repaired to the house of the Grand Inquisitor, she was speedily admitted
to

to an audience. After acknowledging herself to be the writer of the memorial, she gave a full detail of every incident that occurred subsequent to the period at which it concluded. Her recital was attended to with some amazement. The Grand Inquisitor, who professed himself shocked at the unparalleled iniquity of Hernandez, even condescended to approve the attempt she had made to assist the escape of Rosalia, and commended the zeal she had shewn in the cause of religion and virtue, in giving information of the horrible abominations practised in the caverns of San Stephano.

In stating the purport of the letter she had written to the Marchese di Romanzini, she mentioned having requested him to direct a line to Father Francisco, at the Convent of San Ignatius, the moment he should have arrived at Madrid:—thus prepared to expect the Marchese, the Grand Inquisitor immediately took measures to have the note brought to the

Holy Office; and likewise ordered two officials to watch for his arrival, and to conduct him, and whoever might have accompanied him, to the prisons.

Enraged at Hernandez for having imposed on them, the several Inquisitors present concerted together to render the last examination of Rosalia awfully solemn. For this purpose, as well as to manifest their justice, and at the same time intimidate the atrocious Hernandez, it was at length settled that Olivia, who had been ordered into confinement before this consultation begun, should be clothed in a garment similar to that she had on at the time she was supposed to receive her death, and that, her appearance having been rendered terrifically impressive, she should enter the hall by a private door, near the tribunal, and place herself full in the view of Hernandez, at the moment when the proceedings had given him cause to imagine that his design on the life of Rosalia had succeeded.

How

How Olivia fulfilled the instructions she had received, and the effect her appearance in the hall produced, has already been detailed.

CHAP. X.

TO attempt to describe the rapture the Marchese indulged on arriving at the hotel, would be in vain. A thousand times he blessed and embraced his Rosalia, and wept as he received her filial endearments. The Count Guidoni, in speechless ecstasy, gazed on his beautiful intended bride, who, sanctioned by her father's presence, shrunk not from the infolding arms of her beloved Enrico, whose heartfelt emotions she re-

turned with affecting timid tenderness. Nor was she less sensible of the ardent demonstrations of affection and joy, she witnessed in her amiable and delighted brother. All recollection of peril and sorrow was obliterated, by the happiness of the present moment, and devout gratitude to the Divine Protector of the innocent, filled every bosom.

In this scene of mutual bliss, the faithful Agnes was not forgotten. The affection and fidelity she had shewn, procured her the warmest praise ; and the poor girl proved herself worthy of the distinguishing favour she received, by shewing infinitely more joy on hearing she should accompany her lady to Italy, than at the most splendid promises of reward.

When the general emotion had in some degree subsided, Rosalia enquired by what interposition of Providence her situation became known to her family ? The Marchese in reply informed her, that, for two months after her disappearance, he had
vainly

vainly used every possible method to ascertain to which of the coasts of Barbary she had been conveyed, as her having been carried into captivity by the Moors was beyond a doubt.

“ I will not, my dearest child,” he tenderly continued, “ dwell on the agonies we suffered during the time we passed in these unsuccessful efforts—suffice it, that, one morning, just after the Count Guidoni had recovered his liberty, I received an anonymous letter, the contents of which informed me, that, if I wished ever more to behold my daughter, I must hasten, with all possible speed, to Madrid, and when arrived, I was to address a line to Father Francisco, at the Convent of San Ignatius.

“ It is unnecessary to inform my Rosalia that this summons was instantly attended to. Accompanied by the Count and your brother, I sailed from Italy, a few hours after the receipt of the letter. The voyage was quick. Immediately after

landing, we proceeded with the utmost expedition to Madrid. The moment I entered the hotel, I wrote to Father Francisco, and dispatched the note to the convent. The messenger had been gone only a few minutes, when two officials of the Holy Office entered the room, and ordered us to accompany them. Almost overwhelmed with terror and apprehension, we followed our conductors to the prison of the Inquisition. Here we severally underwent long examinations. The Inquisitors appeared to be satisfied with the accounts we respectively gave, and at length ordered a memorial to be read in our hearing. It contained a long list of enormities that would have exceeded credibility, had not I had most lamentable cause to attest the truth of some particulars therein stated. When the secretary had concluded, I was informed that you was a prisoner. The amazement and horror that now seized me, rendered me motionless. The Inquisitor who presided during these
examin-

examinations, at length intimated that you had been accused of an heinous crime ; but not all my entreaties could prevail on him to reveal what the nature of that crime was ; nor was I in the least prepared for the scene I witnessed this night : judge, therefore, what were my feelings, when I beheld my Rosalia arraigned for murder !”

The Marchese was unable to proceed. The recollection of what he had suffered at that dreadful moment, was more than he could well support. In a few moments, however, he checked his emotion, and proceeded.

“ In obedience to the express commands we had received, we continued to observe silence, during the first part of the trial ; but, oh, my child, what agony to behold you, alone and unfriended, before that tremendous tribunal ! At length nature could endure no more.—What followed, my Rosalia is already acquainted with.”

The Marchese ceased. Again he clasped his

his beauteous daughter to his paternal heart, while he ejaculated the prayer of devout gratitude.

The sun had long risen above the horizon, ere Rosalia could be persuaded to seek that repose of which it was evident she had so much need; and when at length she retired, it was more in compliance with the united entreaties of the Marchese, the Duke, and the Count, than from any attention to her own feelings. Whilst she slept, they hovered near the door of her chamber, fearful of trusting her even for a moment out of their presence.

The long and peaceful repose Rosalia now enjoyed, greatly restored her; but when she arose, the glow, which some hours before had suffused her cheek, had entirely vanished, and the paleness which long-suffering and continued close confinement had spread over her countenance, was now too visible to the anxious eyes of a father and a lover; nor could the Duke
behold

behold the pallid looks of his loved sister, without feeling the liveliest sorrow, mingled with indignation.

Rosalia perceived the fears her altered appearance created, and vainly strove to allay them. The assurances of a physician, who had been summoned, alleviated, however, the general distress; he affirmed that she would ere long regain her wonted health, and, as tranquil happiness was now diffused through her bosom, each succeeding hour seemed to confirm the truth of his prediction.

As their return to Italy was not to take place till her health was perfectly re-established, the affairs of Father Albertini meanwhile engaged some share of attention. Through the interest of the Marchese, he had already received a full pardon from the Pope for seducing Victoria from the convent; he was therefore at liberty to acknowledge he still existed, and to claim the restoration of his estates for his daughter Josephine, and was on the

point of taking measures to this effect, when the Marchese received the summons to hasten to Madrid. Albertini was present when the letter was delivered, and, as he had been discoursing with the Marchese on the above subject, the latter, though greatly agitated, promised that, in case he should recover his daughter, he would endeavour to arrange the affairs of his friend, and effect, if possible, a reconciliation between Don Carlos de Gironne and him. The Father accepted these generous offers, with the warmest expressions of gratitude to that invaluable friend, who, though experiencing the highest degree of parental anxiety, was yet not insensible to the happiness and interests of the good Father.

The Marchese now proceeded to fulfil his promise. Surrounded as he was by many of the first nobility of Spain, it would not be difficult, he imagined, to obtain an introduction to Don Carlos, who at this time resided in Madrid.

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The crimes of Don Hernandez were of so flagrant a nature, that secret as were the proceedings of the Inquisition, it was impossible to prevent some part of the story from transpiring. His apostacy to the church, and his correspondence with the infidels, soon became generally whispered, as was also the injuries he had heaped on the Di Romanzini family. The latter having rendered them the subject of universal attention, their acquaintance was sought for by the most distinguished families; and the Marchese at length found it impossible to resist the polite solicitations of Don John de Almaná, who had repeatedly pressed him to reside in his superb mansion during his stay in Spain.

Donna Eleanora, the wife of this grandee, who, like her Lord, possessed many estimable qualities, was charmed with Rosalia, and endeavoured, by the most assiduous attentions, to render her abode pleasing.

As an intimacy subsisted between Don John de Almaná and Don Carlos de Gironne,

ronne, the Marchese understood from the former, that, about a year after Victoria left her convent, Don Carlos had married, and had been some time a widower; that his daughter, the only fruit of this union, was about seventeen, and no less admired by all who knew her for the transcendent charms of her person, than beloved by her father, for the more durable beauties of her mind.

A few hours after this conversation had taken place, Don John received a visit from his noble friend; and the Marchese and his family had now the satisfaction of being introduced to the relative of Albertini and Josephine.

Di Romanzini was struck with the noble figure and expressive features of Don Carlos: his countenance, faintly marked by the hand of time, spoke so much benevolence of mind, that the former could not refrain from indulging a hope that he should not plead the cause of Albertini in vain.

A pressing

A pressing invitation to the house of Don Carlos succeeded this introduction, and was, with inward joy, accepted by the Marchese, who considered the circumstance as a favourable omen.

The appointed day arrived, and the Marchese and his family were punctual to their engagement. The beautiful Donna Estella was introduced to her father's guests, and failed not to inspire them with the admiration which was so justly her due.

That sympathy which actuates congenial minds, quickly attracted Rosalia and Estella to each other, and formed the basis of a friendship which was yet to be cemented by a nearer tie. From this day they became inseparable, and the Duke, who, the moment he beheld Estella, thought her irresistibly charming, was frequently permitted to be of the party : the more he became acquainted with her, the more charming she appeared ; and he at length perceived that he had found in her
a young

a young lady, who, in personal beauty and mental endowments, nearly equalled his idolized sister.

As Don Carlos preserved an invariable silence respecting his sister, and as the subject was too delicate for the Marchese to introduce, the latter continued for a fortnight impressed with the idea that his new friend still harboured the resentment he had formerly expressed at the conduct of that unhappy lady. From this suspicion he was, however, at length released by Rosalia, who, being in the entire confidence of Estella, had learned from her that the happiness of Don Carlos was much lessened by the uncertain fate of a sister, whom he still tenderly esteemed, notwithstanding she had greatly erred.

This intelligence, which afforded the Marchese no small satisfaction, was soon after confirmed by Donna Eleanora, who, in speaking of Don Carlos, said, he had long lamented his beloved sister, and had
for

for several years employed means to discover the place of her retreat ;—but without success.

“ Could she have been traced,” added Donna Eleanora, “ the high interest her brother possesses would doubtless have obtained pardon both for her and Don Alphonso.”

Persuaded that the truly fraternal sentiments now entertained by Don Carlos, would sanction the communication of whatever related to an object so feelingly regretted, the Marchese obtained a private interview with this nobleman ; and, after a short preparatory discourse, briefly narrated all he knew respecting Alphonso, Victoria, and their Josephine.

Don Carlos shewed great emotion during the detail. The grief he felt for the unhappy fate of his sister, was, however, somewhat ameliorated, by the consideration that the much-injured Alphonso was still in existence, and that in Josephine he
should

should find a niece every way worthy of his tenderest regard.

Before the Marchese took leave, he had the satisfaction of receiving repeated assurances from Don Carlos, that he would immediately pursue the most active measures to procure the restoration of the De Avilla estates.

A few days after this interview, the Marchese had the additional happiness of hearing Don Carlos express a wish to behold Albertini and his daughter ; and as there was no probability of his ever more seeing the former, unless he repaired to Italy, it required but little persuasion from the Marchese to prevail on him to consent to accompany him and his family on their return thither.

The happy success with which their revered parent had pleaded the cause of the good Father and the amiable Josephine, had afforded sincere pleasure to Rosalia and the Duke ; but the inexpressible joy
which

which now shone in the fine eyes of the latter, on hearing that the charming Estella was to accompany her father to Italy, was so much superior to the satisfaction he had shewn on the former occasion, that the Marchese felt assured it had been reserved for this lovely young foreigner to vanquish the insensibility of his son—a circumstance from which he would have derived no small pleasure, had he been equally certain that Estella was as susceptible of the Duke's merits, as he seemed to be sensible of her attractions.

The health of Rosalia being now fully re-established, the Marchese and Don Carlos proposed leaving Spain; and while preparations were making for their departure, Di Romanzini visited Father Francisco, the Superior of the Benedictine society, and, by a splendid donation to the convent, proved his gratitude for the humane interest the good Abbot had taken in the concerns of his Rosalia. From Father Francisco the Marchese now learned that
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the unhappy Olivia had lately expired, in consequence of having been attacked by a violent fever, and that she died fully sensible of her awful state, and truly repenting of the crimes which had marked her life.

“ Widely did the sentiments of Hernandez,” he said, “ differ from those expressed by the penitent Olivia. Not even the near approach of the *Auto de Fe*, at which he was to suffer, could make the least impression on his guilt-stained conscience: in him were to be observed only confirmed impenitence and horrible despair.”

The Marchese breathed a sigh of pity and forgiveness, to the memory of Olivia; but shuddered with horror at this account of the lost Hernandez. The subject was, however, soon dropped, and after repeating his grateful acknowledgements to the Abbot, the former took his leave.

At length the day appointed for their departure arrived; and the now happy

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Di Romanzini family, after taking a grateful leave of Don John de Almaná and his amiable lady, and the numerous friends, who regretted their departure, set off, accompanied by Don Carlos and his lovely daughter, for Barcelona, which having reached, they rested here a day ; and, on the following morning, embarked for Italy, where, after a short and pleasant voyage, they arrived in safety.

CHAP. XI.

AS soon as it was known in Naples that the Marchese had returned, accompanied by the Lady Rosalia, all ranks vied with each other in testifying the joy they felt on this occasion.

During his stay in Madrid, the Marchese had frequently written to the venerable Abbess of Santa Maria, and to Father Albertini, respectively informing them of every circumstance as they had occurred: his last letters had specified the time at which the return of himself and family might be expected; nor had he omitted
to

to prepare Albertini for the arrival of Don Carlos, and Donna Estella.

On entering the Pallazo di Romanzini, Rosalia, to her infinite surprise and joy, found herself enfolded in the fond embrace of the Madre Santa Clara, who had for once obtained permission to quit her sacred retreat, that she might be present on this happy occasion. The Countess and her son, both of whom were attired in deep mourning for the late Count, forgot their mutual loss in welcoming the charming Rosalia, who wept as she received the maternal embrace of the former, while her heart thrilled with pain at the recollection of the dreadful tale, in which the Count had been so deeply concerned.

The Marchese, the Duke, and the Count Guidoni, were extremely affected as they received the congratulations of the Countess and Ferdinand; yet as compassion to their feelings had suggested the resolution of concealing from them the dishonour-

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able

able part the late Count had taken in the mysterious transactions which had for years im-bittered the peace of the Di Romanzini family, not a word was spoken on the subject.

Meanwhile, the Marchese was not so much occupied by his own feelings as to forget the attentions due to Don Carlos and his daughter, both of whom he introduced to the Abbess, the Countess, and her son, in terms which shewed the high respect he entertained for the noble guests, and to Josephine, as her near relatives.

About an hour after the arrival of the travellers, Father Albertini, who likewise had obtained leave to absent himself from his convent, was announced. The Marchese hastened to receive him, and experienced a heartfelt satisfaction, while presenting him to Don Carlos. A most affecting meeting between these long-estranged relatives now took place. They mutually wept the misfortunes which had divided their early friendship, and promised

mised to themselves years of happiness, derived from this moment of reconciliation.

The pleasure with which Albertini regarded his beautiful niece, Estella, was equalled by the reverence and respect she felt for him ; while Don Carlos, who, from the instant he beheld Josephine, had discerned the resemblance she bore to his regretted sister, and had experienced painful emotions in consequence, felt himself disposed to love the amiable offspring of her whose memory he still cherished.

Already apprised of the sentiments which Ferdinand and Josephine entertained for each other, Don Carlos now wished that his niece had been less susceptible of the merits of her lover ; for, though not fully acquainted with the dishonourable proceedings of the deceased Count, he had heard enough to render him averse from the union. Disgusted with the character of the father, he felt strongly prejudiced

against the son, and had no doubt that when Albertini should have learned what he had been informed of, he would forbid his daughter to think any more of the representative of a man whose vices had left a stigma on his name.

The Marchese, however, was not inclined to damp the happiness of the present hours, by entering on a detail of events, which could not fail to produce agonizing retrospections; Albertini, therefore, remained for some time unacquainted with the full extent of the late Count's crimes.

A fortnight after the return of the Di Romanzini family, the nuptials of the Count Guidoni and the lovely Rosalia were celebrated with the utmost magnificence; no sad interruption having again changed the prospects of felicity into those of anguish and despair. All now was one continued scene of rejoicing. At night the illuminations, and varied fireworks, which the gardens of the pallazo exhibited, were answered by others in a
3 thousand

thousand different directions; the voluntary demonstrations of joy, which the happiness of the universally beloved and respected Di Romanzini family, excited in every bosom.

Soon after the nuptials, the Marchese, the Duke, Don Carlos, Donna Estella, the Countess Josephine, and the young Count Alvanio, accompanied the lovely bride, and her adoring Guidoni, to Orenza Castle, where the rejoicings were renewed; and happiness once more appeared to have fixed her abode within this stately edifice, whose spacious halls now re-echoed the voice of joy.

Here the prejudices Don Carlos had conceived against the present Count Alvanio, gradually yielded to respect for his virtues, and a short time convinced him that this excellent youth possessed neither the weakness nor the vices of his father.

When at length Albertini was made acquainted with the real character of the late

late Lord, he was extremely shocked ; but the knowledge he had acquired of the heart of Ferdinand, prevented his feeling any sentiment to his disadvantage. Neither did he blight the happiness of his Josephine, by forbidding the addresses of her lover ; nor did he wound the peace of the latter, by revealing to him the crimes of his father.

Consulting only the mutual felicity of his child, and the amiable youth who adored her, Albertini resolved never to quit the sacred asylum he had chosen ; and having reserved only a small portion of the possessions, which, through the interest of Don Carlos, had been restored to him, for charitable purposes, he bestowed them on his loved daughter, who soon after became the wife of the Count Alvania.

The Marchese had with pleasure observed that his son appeared to be more and more attracted by the charms of Donna

Estella ;

Estella; and as her blushes, when addressed by the Duke, were considered by the former as favourable indications of her private sentiments, his happiness received no small addition, when Vivonio requested his approbation of his passion.

The Marchese immediately declared the satisfaction he felt on this occasion; and Don Carlos, whose permission to address his daughter was next sought for by the Duke, was so much delighted with the alliance, that he instantly gave his consent.

The lovely Estella was too sensible of the merits and tenderness of her noble lover, not to smile propitiously on his suit; and, ere a few weeks had elapsed, the lofty walls of the castle again resounded with the nuptial song.

The Countess Dowager Alvanio, in whose hearing no sentence relative to the crimes of her deceased Lord was ever suffered to transpire, was long a delighted witness of that happiness which was the increasing portion

portion of each of the united pair ; while Don Carlos, charmed with his son-in-law, the Duke, whose unabating tenderness, he perceived, constituted the felicity of the amiable Duchess, took up his residence in their magnificent abode, where, with the society of the Marchese, and frequently that of Father Albertini, he enjoyed a happiness so unalloyed, that he could never consent to relinquish it, by returning to his native land.

The Castle and the Pallazo di Orenza were now more constantly the abode of the Count and Countess Guidoni, than was their own sumptuous mansion at Naples, or their elegant villas on the luxuriant shores. Guidoni Castle was but seldom visited during the life of the Marchese, who lived to behold the virtues of his beloved children shine forth in each of their respective offsprings.

Religion, that gilds the lowly abode of poverty, and without which honours and
wealth

wealth are but splendid wretchedness, was early implanted in their hearts, while example shed its prevailing influence over their ductile minds. Fondly emulating the virtues of their revered parents, they traced with zeal the paths of piety and peace. Taught from the earliest dawn of reason, to consider this life only as the thorny road to regions of eternal felicity, inspired with steady faith, they fixed the eye of hope on the brilliant prospects of futurity, and passed along the route of sorrow, unallured by the spacious blandishments of vice, whose votaries, unenlightened by the precepts of *divine truth*, rush onward in the destructive ways, where gaudy flowers conceal the noxious weeds, whose poison the deluded wanderers imbibe, nor perceive the fatal effects until too late: the delusions of pleasure are then succeeded by the bitter pangs of unavailing remorse, which gnawing on the heart, rendered, by years of habit, callous to

to repentance, attends the wretched victims of folly to the confines of the grave, where, hovering a moment, the dismaying voice of an internal monitor loudly proclaims there is for the wicked a dreadful *hour of retribution.*

FINIS.



LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL STREET.



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